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A

SHORT HISTORY

OF THE

BRITISH EMPIRE

DURING THE YEAR 1794.

BY FRANCIS PLOWDEN, L. C. D.

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Vis confilî expers mole ruit fuâ:
Vim temperatam Dii quoque provehant
In majus; iidem odere vires
Omne nefas animo moventes. Hor.

Self-ruin works the ill-judg'd rash design:
Heav'n gives increase to Wisdom's temper'd plan:
In machinating guilt, the wrath divine
Blasts the malevolent intent of Man.

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1795.

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SHORT HISTORY
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE



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TO HIS GRACE
THE DUKE OF BEDFORD,
TO WHOSE
NATIVE DIGNITY AND IMPORTANCE,
TO WHOSE
SUPERIOR TALENTS AND VIRTUE,
TO WHOSE
HEREDITARY PATRIOTISM
THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND
LOOK UP WITH CONFIDENCE
FOR THEIR WELFARE AND SAFETY
IN THIS MOST CALAMITOUS MOMENT,
THE FOLLOWING SHEETS
ARE WITH PERMISSION MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS GRACE'S

MOST RESPECTFUL AND

DEVOTED HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

Essex Street,
January 1795.

TO HIS GRACE
THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE of the AUTHOR.

EVERY man by the publication of his opinions stands in some degree committed for the consequences of them. Inasmuch as any of them tend to mislead, deceive, or injure mankind, he is obliged to explain, retract, rectify and repair, as his judgment and ability shall enable him.

An anonymous person calling himself *An Associator* has thought proper to address a Letter to me upon my two last publications, viz. *A short History of the British Empire during the last Twenty Months*, and *A friendly and constitutional Address to the People of Great-Britain*; in which he has treated me as the *disappointed retainer of a party, the captious intriguer and agitator, in a word a Jacobin.*

Of every species of writing I mostly execrate that of personal controversy.— I respect my readers too much, voluntarily to obtrude upon them even one line upon the odious subject of *self*. Had the *Associator* charged me with mistating any historical fact, it would have been my duty to retract or rectify the error. Had the inconsistencies with which he charges me been solely personal; I should have noticed them as little, as I shall the abuse and ribaldry with which the letter is furcharged. As however I am not absolutely singular in disapproving of the levelling doctrines of Mr. Paine, and at the same time in condemning certain overstretched opinions upon prerogative of Mr. Burke; as I am not the only individual in the nation convinced, that because the popular representation of the people in parliament is fuller in the 18th than it was in the 14th century, therefore no reformation in it is wanting: in a word, as I do not differ from every one of my fellow subjects in
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the conviction, that because his Majesty's present Ministers think it advisable to lavish the blood and treasure of the nation upon a desperate and unsuccessful war, therefore the continuance of it is essential to the preservation of the British Constitution ; I beg leave to remind the unprejudiced part of my readers, that wide is the difference between the enemies of the Constitution and the opposers of certain measures of particular Ministers : between the *Malcontent* with the reality of the laws and constitution, and the *Malcontent* with efforts to substitute for that reality arbitrary power and despotism under the semblance of freedom. To such as cannot discover this difference from the contents of my publications further elucidation will be useless ; of such as will not discriminate, additional arguments will but aggravate the obstinacy.

If praise to the deserving could be conveyed through so foul a vehicle, no small
share

share of it would accrue from the Associator's abuse to Messrs. Pigott, Erskine and Fox. Nor could Fortescue himself have conceived a higher eulogy of the laws of England than the Associator's lamentation, that an English Jury cannot give their verdict by a majority of voices as in Scotland. I am sorely abused for having in my History made honourable mention of the Jury, that acquitted the Proprietors of the Morning Chronicle: and my Associating Correspondent undertakes to assure the public, that the verdict for their acquittal was not procured by the proof and conviction of their innocence, but by the dread of hunger of ten at least of the Jury. The public will receive as they think proper this curious matter of intelligence: but as we are now arrived at that incredible pitch of political abandonment, that after the fullest and most solemn trials ever known in this country, the Law Officers and Ministers of the Crown can vauntingly
arraign

arraign three repeated Verdicts of different Juries upon the same question, deny the acquittal of prisoners to be proof of their innocence, repine at the imperfection of the English Law that harasses no man with reiterated trials for one offence, and insult the plain sense of the nation with the new-fangled jargon of *acquitted felons*, it becomes requisite to caution my countrymen against affixing guilt to such as are cleared of it by the verdict of their peers. The practice is little justified by the idle gossip of those pliant Jurymen who square their verdict to their stomachs, fit their oaths to the conviction of others, and calumniate the men whose veracity and uprightness they could neither corrupt nor conquer.

Fair trial by Jury is the corner-stone of British liberty: every attempt therefore to disregard, vilify or condemn the verdict of an uncorrupted Jury of Englishmen, is a direct effort to enslave the
I people

people of England, whether it proceed from the bench, pulpit, throne, or senate: and will ultimately drive them into resistance against such invaders of this palladium of their freedom, as the last resort for preserving their rights and liberties,

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SHORT HISTORY, &c.

CHAPTER I.

JANUARY.

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Mr.

*Mr. Pitt's Administration—Lord Stanhope's Motion
against interfering with the Government of France—
85,000 Seamen granted for the Year—State of Halifax
—Defection of the Party in Ireland.*

THE current of events during the year 1794 is the direct and unavoidable consequence of the plans adopted by the present Cabinet, as essential to the preservation of the British Constitution. The effects of reasoning upon the policy or exigency of these measures have been fully experienced in the houses of Parliament, and the variety of publications upon both sides of the question. Englishmen are naturally prodigal of their confidence, and proportionably reluctant to withdraw it when once bestowed: reason and conviction will but rarely operate this change; fore experience alone can ensure the effect. If the Nation shall at a future period find a change of measures necessary to its welfare, it will be from feeling their consequences, not from foreseeing their tendency. In my History of the Twenty Months immediately preceding the year 1794, I endeavoured to trace the events
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of that period to the introduction of a new, and in my judgment supereminently mischievous system of political doctrines. As they still continue to operate upon a decided majority of the Nation, my task will be to mark their progressive influence in the subsequent acts of this eventful tragedy.

The year 1793 had closed with an exhibition equally honourable and advantageous to the French Republic, as disgraceful and detrimental to Great Britain. The abandonment of Lord Moira's expedition to succour the Royalists in the interior of France, like most of the ill planned and worse executed measures of our Cabinet, had given the French Convention the idea and opportunity of crushing the remaining force of that party in France, by the means of which alone a Counter-revolution could have been effected, had such a project been ever seriously intended by Ministers. At the very time that it was believed, or pretended to be believed, that the Royalists were to appear in full force upon the

northern coast of Brittany to cover and protect the landing of our men, the Executive Government of France knew that the main body of their force commanded a part of the southern coast of Brittany, by possessing the island of Noirmoutier. Here they attacked the Royalists, and totally defeated them: they killed above 500; 1200 of them threw down their arms, and surrendered at discretion: they gained by this victory above 50 pieces of cannon and 8000 muskets. From the different accounts of this expedition against the island of Noirmoutier, it does not appear that the Royalists made that vigorous stand against the Republicans which their desperate situation required. They made but a slight resistance; and the Republican reports assure us, that though the town be remarkably well situated for defence, yet that the Royalists surrendered at discretion even before the Republicans had come within reach of their batteries.

The island of Noirmoutier, which is close
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to the southernmost shore of Brittany, is about twenty miles in circumference, and might evidently have afforded a secure landing to our troops, whilst in possession of the Royalists, if our real intention had been to form a junction with them. Delbec, Dubois, Tingry, D'Hauterive, Mussey, and all the chiefs of that body of the Royalists, were taken and secured. Nor do we in fact since this time read of any particular stand or any formidable attempt having been made by that party. When we reflect that the expedition under Lord Moirā ended in the loss of more than a thousand of our men by sickness, the landing and quartering of several thousand Hessians on the Hampshire coast *, and in the apparent annihilation of the force it was fitted out to support, it is but a piteous solace to be left in doubt whether the failure arose from the want of foresight, intelligence, energy or sincerity of those who projected it.

* How far this were constitutional will be seen hereafter, when the matter was taken up in Parliament.

The success of the Republicans seems not to have been confined to particular spots or occasions. The Spaniards, who upon the taking of Toulon had been very industrious in spreading manifestos to invite all Frenchmen to imitate the example of the Toulonese *, suffered repeated checks and defeats. So little attention was paid to the protection of our trade, that in the course of ten or twelve days upwards of threescore prizes were carried into Cherburgh, Morlaix, and Brest; which gave occasion to the too true observation of Maland, who reported the captures to the Convention, "That in truth it seemed as if the English were determined to pay the whole expences of the war." The abandonment of the lines of Weissebourg, the raising of

* It is singular that these manifestos should be chiefly grounded upon religious motives: they denounce those as heretics who shall refuse to follow the example of the Toulonese. The horror of the Roberespierrean system may have operated much towards inducing them to treat with Lord Hood; their zeal for the Catholic faith nothing.

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the siege of Landau, and the crossing of the Rhine by the Combined Armies, gave a most important turn of affairs in favour of the French. In consequence of which the Austrian General Wurmser was removed from his command by the Court of Vienna; and the Duke of Brunswick resigned the command of the Prussian army, in which he was succeeded by General Mollendorf. It is notorious that the Duke of Brunswick on this occasion differed from all the Austrian Generals, and loudly protested against the disgraceful measures of retiring without risking a battle. A general engagement took place, which proved unsuccessful. Upon this as upon most occasions of the discomfiture of a combined army, the misfortune was reciprocally cast upon the commanders of the different powers. However mysterious or suspicious the conduct of the Duke may have been in the first disgraceful campaign against France, where he acted under the immediate eye of the King of Prussia, certain it is, that in this last conflict with the enemy he manifested a zeal,

B 4 activity,

activity, and bravery, which on this day at least were not found in the commanders of the Austrians. Their main body had been thrown into confusion, and the French had possessed themselves of some heights, so as completely to cut off their retreat. The Duke sword in hand, with infinite presence of mind, though not without uncommon exertions, rallied the discomfited Austrians, and led them on against the enemy, whom they dislodged from the heights, and thus secured the important, though never sufficiently appraised advantage of a regular and orderly retreat.

So singular is the spirit of the present day, that when an individual undertakes to think of and retail to the public any of the great events that involve the dearest interests of his country, he is expected and indeed required to represent them all as terminating happily, and tending essentially to promote the welfare and preserve the unshaken Constitution of Great Britain: for acting otherwise he is often prosecuted at law ;

law; and never fails to be persecuted as an agitating or seditious member of the community. Alarming indeed were the times, when a patriot complained, *Quod gemitus Romæ non sit liber!* Such representations of events by Englishmen, removed from the scenes of action, may indeed appear unwarrantable to such as give to Ministers an unlimited and unqualified credit for their prudence and integrity. But even such men will judge otherwise of the motives which at this juncture induced the Duke of Brunswick to give in his resignation to the King of Prussia, which he accompanied with a letter that merits well the deep reflection of our infatuated Crusaders against the French Republic*. Were these
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* The motives, Sire, which make me desire my recall from the Army, are founded upon the unhappy experience, *that the want of connection, the distrust, the egotism, the spirit of cabal,* have disconcerted the measures adopted during the two last campaigns, and still disconcert the measures taken by the Combined Armies. Oppressed by the misfortune of being involved, by the error of others, in the unfortunate situation in which I
find

the principles and the dictates of a democratic Jacobin, it would be truly indecorous to

find myself, I feel very sensibly that the world judges of military characters by their successes, without examining causes. Raising the siege or the blockade of Landau, will make an epoch in the history of this unfortunate war ; and I have the misfortune of being implicated in it. The reproach will fall upon me, and the innocent will be confounded with the guilty. Notwithstanding all misfortunes, I would not have given way to my inclination of laying at your Majesty's feet my desire of relinquishing a career which has been the principal study of my life : but when one has lost one's trouble, one's labour and efforts ; when the objects of the campaign are lost, and there is no hope that a third campaign may offer a more favourable issue ; what part remains to be taken by the man most attached to, the most zealous for, your Majesty's interest and your cause, but that of avoiding further disasters ? The same reasons now divide the powers which have hitherto divided them : the movements of the armies will suffer from it, as they have hitherto done : their motions will be retarded and embarrassed, and the delay of re-establishing the Prussian army, politically necessary, will become perhaps the source of a train of misfortunes for next campaign, the consequences of which are not to be calculated. It is not war which I object to ; it is not war which I wish to avoid ; but it is dishonour which I fear in my situation, where the faults of other generals would

to suppose that our gracious Sovereign would, in the present prevalence of democratic

would fall upon me, and where I could neither act according to my principles, nor according to my prospects. Your Majesty will perhaps remember what I had the honour to represent to you the day you quitted Escheveiler : I exposed all my embarrassments, my troubles and my misfortunes ; I exerted all my efforts to prevent any inconveniency : unfortunately the event has proved the insufficiency thereof ; it is therefore only the intimate persuasion I have of the impossibility I am in to effect what is right, which dictates to me the measure of requesting your Majesty to appoint a successor to me as soon as possible. This measure, however afflicting to me, is nevertheless a consequence of those sorrowful reflections I have made upon my situation. Prudence requires I should retire, and honour advises it. *When a great nation like that of France is conducted by the terror of punishments, and by enthusiasm, an unanimous sentiment, and the same principle, ought to prevail in the measures of the Coalesced Powers. But when, instead thereof, each army acts separately and alone of its own accord, without any fixed plan, without unanimity, and without principles, the consequences are such as we have seen at Dunkirk, at raising the blockade of Maubeuge, at the storming of Lyons, at the destruction of Toulon, and at the raising of the blockade of Landau. Heaven preserve your Majesty from great misfortunes ! but every thing is to be feared, if confidence, harmony, uniformity of sentiments, of principles,*

cratic rage, select from all Europe his Highness's daughter to be the means of continuing his royal posterity upon the Throne of Great Britain.

Criminal as it has been lately holden in this country to think peace with France compatible with the subsistence of any regular government, we do not find the sentiments of the Duke of Brunswick confined to himself alone. In those countries where popular alarm would not serve the ends of an interested junto, where the servants of the State could not feed upon the breath of its expiring greatness, we find a spirit of true patriotism soaring above the level of pusillanimity and baseness, firmly withstanding the imperious insolence of force, and the seducing lure of corruption. About the beginning of the last month our

principles, and of actions, do not take place of the opposite sentiments which have been the source of all misfortunes for two years past. My best wishes always attend your Majesty, and your glory will be my happiness.

Oppenheim, January 6, 1794.

Minister

Minister Plenipotentiary to the Swiss Cantons had presented a most curious piece of diplomatic eloquence to the Helvetic Body, which seemed to have been forged in the same furnace with the red-hot memorial presented by Lord Auckland to the States of Holland. The bolt fell not in Switzerland upon the same inflammable matter, as it had in Holland. Here was no monarchical influence to keep up under the plausible appearance of a Stadtholder, no aristocratic interest to raise against the democracy of a Republican State. The truly free and honest Switzers received motionless the torrent of abuse against the French Republic, and undertook to judge for themselves upon the policy of resenting the insults, and attempting to avenge the injuries, which they had received from France. They would not be cajoled into the specious pretext of exposing their brave and free citizens to the horrors of a fruitless and ruinous war, because they were assured by a British Minister, *that the present war being carried on against usurpers, any correspondence with them*

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by a neutral State would be an acknowledgment of their authority, and consequently an act prejudicial to the Allied Powers. They were men of principle, and applied it to the existing circumstances. They could not forget that the Swiss federacy had arisen from resistance to the tyrannical abuses of a corrupt and proud Minister of the Emperor Albert *.

Animated with the hereditary spirit of their virtuous ancestors, they nobly dared to speak freely to the representative of his Britannic Majesty. That they had for centuries adopted those principles for their constitution that rested upon the relations

* Geyssler, the Imperial Governor of Uri, had the insolence to set up his cap upon a pike, and require the same respect to it as to himself in person. William Tell refused his obeisance, and was condemned to die, or to shoot at an apple set upon the head of his own son, who was bound to a tree. He hit the apple; and being asked by Geyssler, the brutal spectator of this awful scene, why he had another arrow in his quiver—*To kill thee, tyrant,* answered Tell, *had I missed the apple, or murdered my son.*

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of peace, amity and good-neighbourhood with all surrounding powers; that to preserve the enjoyment of that happy and peaceful situation all their most zealous efforts tended; and that they would unite their force to repel even the slightest attempts that might be made to disturb their repose, or to undermine the foundation of it by any destructive principles. Thrice happy country! blest with rulers that have spirit to avow, and virtue to act up to the principles of your constitution!

The confused darkness of the measures of our Cabinet, as well as those of the Combined Powers, renders it impossible at present to speak with that precision of the facts, which the winding up of the catastrophe will probably afford to the future annalist. It appears from the speech of Barrere in the Convention, that proposals were about this time made by the Combined Powers for a *provisional* acknowledgment of the French Republic, and a cessation of arms for two years. They were

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treated

treated by the Convention with contempt and indignation. Though denied by some, many circumstances concur to establish the truth of this fact: Mr. Pitt's manifesto to the French nation, which announced his readiness to treat with any efficient Government, was a shuffling prelude to such a temporary treaty, which must have been made with the then existing Executive Government, with which he denied in that very manifesto the possibility of treating at all: the tragical link of disasters, that weighed down the whole confederacy: the resignation of the Duke of Brunswick, and above all the emphatical letter that accompanied it, which, although it have but recently come to the knowledge of the public, must be presumed had been long communicated to the allied Courts: and the reluctance of the Minister to meet the Parliament, that he might prolong the chapter of accidents, that last and desperate resort of the rash and bewildered Statesman. In a word, to the rejection of such proposals by the French can I only refer the following words of his Majesty's

speech to the House of Commons*:—*Their discontinuance or relaxation could hardly procure even a short interval of delusive repose, and could never terminate in security or peace.*

If ever the credulity of a nation were practised upon by men, whose interest it was to blind the instruments of their projects, it certainly was the speech put into the mouth of his Majesty at the opening of the Parliament; a speech patched up by the Minister out of the wretched shreds of dubious or lost advantages, vouching against the lamentations of the underwriters and adventurers for the unprecedented protection of our commerce, and sporting with the rational powers of reflecting men, by assuring them *that the circumstances by which the further progress of the Allies had been hitherto impeded, confirmed the expectation of ultimate success.*

In the House of Peers Lord Stair moved

* In January, 1794.

the address to his Majesty upon the speech, and was seconded by Lord Auckland. In this debate Lord Spencer and Lord Mansfield were particularly forward and pointed in approving of the war, and consequently were for the address. Lord Guildford, the Duke of Norfolk, and Lord Lansdowne, were those who spoke most strongly against it. Upon the division there appeared only 12 for the amendment to the address which had been proposed by the Earl of Guildford, against 97. To so small a number were now reduced the Peers who dared to oppose the system of this fatal war.

In the Commons Lord Clifden moved the address of thanks, and was seconded by Sir Peter Burrell. The debate chiefly consisted of the speeches of Lord Mornington, Mr. Wyndham, and Mr. Pitt, who very strenuously supported the necessity of the war, and attempted to prove the success of it, against Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox, who violently reprobated it as unjust, unnecessary,

fary, and unsuccessful. Mr. Fox moved an amendment to the address, upon which the House divided, 59 against 277.

From this and all the subsequent debates in both Houses of Parliament, during the remaining part of the session, it clearly appears that the reason, motive, or pretext, for Mr. Fox's former friends going over to the Minister, were unexceptionably the difference from him upon the alarming danger of our country from insurrection at home, and the necessity of the war against France for the preservation of our religion, laws, liberties, and constitution. In proportion to the strength of every man's conviction must he necessarily wonder at the difference of others from him upon a subject equally open to the information of both. Hence arises the difficulty of speaking with moderation and temper upon subjects that appear to carry conviction little short of mathematical demonstration. The secession of so many from the Whig Party, that had for these last ten

years uniformly and steadily opposed the administration of Mr. Pitt, is a circumstance of too deep importance to the nation to be passed over in silence. Their ground or pretence for seceding is certainly new, and did not exist at the beginning or during the continuance of the greatest part of Mr. Pitt's administration. From the nature and construction of our Constitution, an Opposition to the Ministry of the day must always exist; but it becomes a personal insult to presume that any man opposes the measures of his Majesty's servants upon any other ground than that the principles or actions of the Ministers are dangerous to the State, or hostile to the Constitution. A change of opinion may certainly take place in any man, and with that change an honest man alters his conduct. The worst of Ministers may propose and bring forward a measure, which his most strenuous and upright opponent may be under a strict obligation of not opposing; but whilst his conviction lasts of the unconstitutional principles upon which a particular Administration

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tion is founded and supported, probity and integrity leave him at the moment in which he gives his support to such a system.

Deeply does it affect the interests of Great Britain, that the real political principles of the leading members of its two estates should be decidedly ascertained and known to the public. As therefore the deserters of the Whig Party appear to outvie all others in their zeal for carrying on this *just and necessary* war, it becomes the duty of the historian to prevent the reader from confounding the approbation of one act of the Minister with a cordial and unqualified adoption of his principles and general system of measures.

The Duke of Portland, who succeeded the late Marquis of Rockingham in heading the respectable Whig Party, which once commanded a large portion of the national esteem and confidence, when he first gave his support to the present war against France, had the caution to declare in the

House of Lords *, “ that it was not on
 “ account of any personal attachment to
 “ the present Administration that he sup-
 “ ported it. He could not forget the man-
 “ ner in which they came into power ; he
 “ could not forget the many circumstances
 “ in their conduct by which, in his opinion,
 “ they had forfeited all title to the confi-
 “ dence of the nation ; he could not forget
 “ that to their misconduct many of our
 “ present difficulties were owing.” What
 the father so openly and unequivocally
 avowed in the Lords, the son within a very
 short time professed more strongly and more
 emphatically in the Commons †. “ His
 “ political sentiments, said the Marquis of
 “ Tichfield, and attachments remained *the*
 “ *same* that they had ever been. His opi-
 “ nion of the Gentlemen who composed
 “ the present Administration was in no re-
 “ spect altered ; but he felt the dangers

* Vid. Debates in the Lords on Dec. 19, 1792.

† Marquis of Tichfield’s speech in the Commons,
 31st December, 1792.

“ which

“ which surrounded us, and the necessity
 “ in that case of giving to Government
 “ such support as might enable it to act
 “ with effect : a support therefore directed
 “ to that effect, and governed by those con-
 “ siderations, was that which he meant dis-
 “ tinctly to give them. The Bill under
 “ consideration he conceived to be one of
 “ those measures, and therefore it should
 “ have his support. But in declaring those
 “ intentions, which, as he had already said,
 “ were formed on his opinion of the crisis
 “ in which the country stood, a crisis which
 “ he must attribute in a great measure to
 “ the misconduct of the present Ministry,
 “ he added, that he could not too explicitly
 “ declare, that in no other respect could he
 “ give them any share of his confidence ;
 “ and that he could not too openly avow
 “ his attachment to those principles and
 “ connections with which he had the hap-
 “ piness of entering into public life, and to
 “ which it was his sincere wish for ever to
 “ adhere,”

These explanatory avowals of the father and son in their respective Houses of Parliament, were evidently made to prevent that confusion of error in the public mind which it is the duty of the annalist of their subsequent conduct to guard his readers against. They were old and deeply rooted sentiments not to be torn up even with the violence of a hurricane, much less removed by the transient blasts of flattery, deceit, or corruption. His Grace in the year 1784, on the 31st of January, wrote from Devonshire House to those Country Gentlemen who then wished him to coalesce with Mr. Pitt—*I believe you will agree that the continuance of the present Ministry, and the honour of the House of Commons, are not very easily reconcileable.* And again, within three days he further assured the same Gentlemen, who pressed him to a confidential conference with Mr. Pitt, as the representative of the then existing Administration—*If I had done this I must have fallen in your esteem, (which I assure you is a very serious object to me)*

me) as I should have shewn myself insensible of what is due to the House of Commons.*

It would be tedious to notice the different apologies, explanations, and avowals, made by the long litany of profelytes to the present measures, when they were reasoned, or frightened, or cajoled, or seduced, into the abandonment of their old friends—their own declarations hitherto forbid me to add—and the support of those measures and principles which for ten years they had steadily and resolutely opposed. The explanatory declaration of Mr. Wyndham, made in the House of Commons on the 13th of December 1792, shall stand for all the rest. He said, that, “strange as it might seem, he
“ should vote that night with those whose
“ measures he had uniformly and conscien-
“ tiously reprobated, in opposition to those
“ whose political sentiments on almost every
“ occasion were in unison with his own.

* These notes are still extant in his Grace's own hand writing.

“ Indeed he had often given his opinion in
 “ that House, that in the year 1784 most
 “ unconstitutional measures had been adopt-
 “ ed, and unconstitutional principles main-
 “ tained ; and on the same grounds he had
 “ often since reprobated the conduct of Mi-
 “ nisters, who had pretty uniformly ad-
 “ hered to the system upon which they had
 “ come into power : nay, he was of opinion,
 “ that to the proceedings of 1784 he might
 “ ascribe the evils of our present situation.”

As few or none of these converted advocates
 for the war have by any further avowals or
 public declarations informed the public that
 they have extended or enlarged their confi-
 dence in Mr. Pitt’s administration, I must,
 in the sequel of my history of the current
 year, speak of them as retainers of all their
 former opinions and sentiments upon the
 source, continuance, and support of Mr.
 Pitt’s administration.

The strength of the Opposition of both
 Houses to the present war having been seen
 by the divisions upon the address, it became
 obvious

obvious that any further attempts to carry a question upon the policy of discontinuing it, could serve no other purpose than that of convincing the nation in the fore and humble moment of regret and indignation at its failure, that there existed some firm friends of the people, whom alarm and menace could not intimidate, whom vanity and corruption could not seduce into a dereliction of their true interests and welfare. Imprest with an enthusiasm of truth and reason, the Earl of Stanhope could not even be induced to await the conveniency of his friends to attend his motion in the House of Peers—" To present an address to his Majesty, humbly representing that no country ought to interfere with the internal government of another Independent State. That by the new Constitution of France, it is evident the French people did not interfere with the government of other nations, which was manifest from the 118th and 119th articles of their Constitution ; and humbly to beseech his Majesty

“ Majesty to acknowledge the French Republic, for the purpose of procuring a speedy reconciliation and a lasting peace.” The motion not being seconded, was negatived of course.

When Mr. Pitt in a Committee of the whole House read the resolution, “ that it was the opinion of the Committee that eighty-five thousand men be granted to his Majesty for the sea service, for the year 1794, including twelve thousand one hundred and fifteen marines,” Mr. Fox rose, not to oppose the motion, for he believed it to be generally agreed, that if the war were to be persisted in, it ought to be carried on with vigour and energy, particularly in the naval department; but to enquire into the facts, how our navy had been employed, and how our trade had been protected. In the course of this desultory debate, a very material fact was brought forward by Mr. Sheridan respecting the situation of Halifax. Mr. Dundas in the last session had contradicted a statement

ment made by Lord Wycombe of the defenceless situation of Halifax, and had asserted that there were at least four thousand men left to defend it. It now appeared, contrary to the assertion of the Right Hon. Secretary, from accounts as late as the 7th of the preceding month of December, that the trade of that place had no protection, that it was utterly unprovided of the means of defence in case of an attack, and that the inhabitants were in the utmost alarm; having only one frigate at Halifax, two companies of artillery, two of infantry, and three hundred volunteers unfit for any service. The absence of Mr. Dundas deprived the House of any explanation or retraction upon this important matter. In the conversation which afterwards arose in the House, two assertions were made by Members, that ought certainly to be attended to by their constituents, if they should aspire to the honour of representing them in a future Parliament. Mr. Alderman Anderson undertook to answer for the merchants trading to the Baltic, that they were highly
satisfied

satisfied with the protection afforded to the trade, and the punctuality of convoys ; and Mr. Brandling even went to the extent of asserting that the people of Newcastle had never found such protection afforded to trade in any former war. Neither the Right Hon. Secretary, the Alderman, nor the Member for Newcastle, have been publicly called upon to prove their statements.

The Parliament of Ireland was opened with the singular phenomenon of no amendment being proposed to the address in either House. The defection of the party in Ireland seemed to be more general than in England ; not even a dozen Members in the House of Commons stood up in opposition to the present system. The old steady opponents of the present Ministry squared their consciences and conduct upon this occasion to the superseding necessity of supporting the measure that was adopted by Great Britain. Upon this principle did Mr. Grattan and many other *quondam* patriots tender their services to a Ministry
which

which for ten years they had uniformly opposed. It is however to be presumed that in Ireland as well as in England, the single question of war was either the pretext or the ground for this unnatural coalition.

CHAPTER II.

 FEBRUARY.

CONTENTS.

Nature of the present Opposition—Discussion upon the Legality of landing foreign Troops in England without the Consent of Parliament—Lord Albemarle's Motion in the Lords for a Bill to indemnify the Ministers—Lord Auckland the only Lord who held the landing of foreign Troops to be legal—Inutility of making Motions from the small Minorities—Lord Lansdowne's Motion for Peace with France—Duke of Grafton comes forward after Twenty Years Retirement from Politics—Motions in both Houses on behalf of Messrs. Muir and Palmer.—Mr. Adam's Motion concerning the Criminal Law in Scotland—French Officers under Lord Moira—His Lordship's Account of his own Expedition—Alarm of an Invasion—Colonel Maek assists at a Council of War ; also the Duke of York—Pichegru's first Movements with 140,000 Men.—State of the Armies—Real Situation of the Royalists in Vendée—Perfidy of the King of Prussia—Remonstrance from Genoa against our Conduct

*Conduct towards them—The French General La Vaux's
spirited Rejection of a Bribe.*

NEVER has there occurred in the annals of the British history so much unanimity in Parliament upon any system of measures, as that carried on by Mr. Pitt for the prosecution of the present war against republican France. Never consequently did an Opposition act upon purer convictions of their rectitude than on the present occasion. Their numbers dwindled to absolute insignificance : proselytism profusely recompensed : secession no longer vilified : we behold them struggling against every advantage of power, of opulence, of patronage ; against the prejudices of the people, the frowns of royalty, the malevolence of long-rooted enmities, and the keener rancour of newly lost friendships. The most fertile malice can invent no other ground of their opposition, than the honourable solace of every true patriot—*Mens sibi conscia recti*. Their real grounds, motives and reasons may be hereafter seen in the silent page of history, when

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the present vortex of prejudice shall have spent itself.

The landing of several thousand Hessian troops on the coasts of Hampshire, and retaining them in quarters, were circumstances that alarmed the opponents of the war, as violent encroachments of the Crown upon the liberties of the subject: and Mr. Grey moved in the House of Commons, "That
" to employ foreigners in any situation of
" military trust, or to bring foreign troops
" into this kingdom, without the consent
" of Parliament first had and obtained, is
" contrary to law." To such an unaccountable degree of alarm had the *justice and necessity* of this war fastened upon the minds of its newly converted advocates, that upon this abstracted constitutional question, Mr. Serjeant Adair was the only one of them sufficiently honest to approve of the principle and truth of the motion; though he, to get rid of the discussion, moved for the previous question. The metaphysics of Mr. Wyndham, and the constitutional independence

dence of Mr. Powys, broke forth into uncommon exertions to prove the legality of the measure; and the Law Officer of the Crown, Mr. Attorney General, though he said that he should not enter fully into the discussion of this great constitutional question, upon which those only would pronounce readily who considered rashly; yet in going over the precedents that had been brought forward by different speakers, he positively concluded, that in the case then before the House, nothing had been done illegal, unconstitutional, or in violation of the Declaration of Rights and the Act of Settlement.

Upon the legality of this measure our Minister had hastily committed himself and his party; and it is to be hoped, that he yielded for once at least to the strength of an honest opinion. As the point however has been misrepresented to the public; it becomes necessary to state, that the Gentlemen of the Opposition did not object against the actual landing of the sickly Hessians

fians upon our coasts, under the existing circumstances; but they called for a Bill to indemnify the Ministers for having done the act, which it should be hereafter clearly understood ought not to be done without the consent of Parliament. For this the young Earl of Albemarle made a motion in the House of Lords, and accompanied it with a speech that ensured to his country the flattering promise of the most able and steady support of the Constitution in its genuine purity. Leave was given to bring in the Bill, which was read a first time; and upon his Lordship's moving that it should be read a second time, it was strenuously opposed by Lord Spencer; not indeed upon the demerits of the question, but upon the inexpediency of the measure: he was perhaps sensible, or advised, that it might indirectly censure that system which he had so recently pledged himself to support.

The debate in the Lords took a very different turn from what it had in the Commons. Here the landing of foreign troops without

without the previous sanction of Parliament, was admitted to be illegal by the whole House, excepting Lord Auckland. As he had been the very earliest convert to Mr. Pitt's political principles, so was he resolved to prove the sincerity of his convictions, by an unlimited devotion to his entire creed: he blushed not in the face of his old and his new friends, in defiance of the unanimous dissent of the whole House of Peers, like an upright, unshaken, and incorruptible patriot, to profess without hesitation his decided opinion, that it is *constitutional and legal for the King to introduce foreign troops in time of war into this country, without the previous consent of Parliament* *. Notwithstanding this general sense of the House

* This noble Lord, though somewhat versatile, is of a gregarious disposition: he dislikes solitude; accordingly he afterwards retracted his opinion, and moved, that in Lord Radnor's protest against the rejection of the Indemnity Bill such words should be expunged from the Journals, as noticed there being an exception of only one opinion upon the legality of the measure.

against the illegality of the measure, the Bill of Indemnity to Ministers was thrown out by carrying the motion for the previous question; twelve only were found in the minority. A striking instance of the predetermined resolution of Parliament to support every measure brought forward by the present Minister; where the same measure was supported by a decided majority of the Commons, who held it to be *legal* and *constitutional*, as by the Lords, who held it unanimously (except Lord Auckland) to be *illegal and unconstitutional*.

The like fate attended every question, that was brought before either House of Parliament during the session. Thus ended the debates upon the army estimates, in which the late campaign was maintained to have been uncommonly successful; thus concluded Mr. Fox's motion for referring to a Committee an inquiry into the protection given to the trade of his Majesty's subjects, by convoy or otherwise, during the war. A readiness to meet enquiry was
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heretofore deemed the strongest presumption of innocence. This question too concerned the war, and therefore carried with it the whole tide of Mr. Pitt's former friends, as well as the intermingled stream of his new alliance. The House of Commons voted the protection sufficient for the trade; and the Minister, to give sanction to their vote, effectually rendered the protection daily more sufficient, by rendering the objects of protection less numerous: of this lamentable truth the black lists at Lloyd's exhibit above 800 instances, in so many captured vessels since the commencement of hostilities. Thus also terminated the Marquis of Lansdowne's motion for peace with France, which was preceded by a speech of great length and greater eloquence energy and information: the wonderful powers of this great statesman brought forth the Duke of Grafton in support of the motion, after a recess from politics of more than twenty years. Very unusual attention was paid to both their speeches; many personal compliments were made to both of them by

their opponents, and the minority divided as usual, one dozen against the House. Thus, in a word, ended Mr. Sheridan's motion on the unprotected state of Nova Scotia. He wished to comply with the two duties which he owed to his constituents; that of preserving them from war, which he had already attempted, and that of seeing that the supplies voted for prosecuting the war were faithfully and diligently applied by the Ministers who had involved us in it; and this he proposed by moving for the present enquiry. A very animated debate ensued, in which the Minister was closely pressed with his constant reluctance and dread to meet fair enquiry; to which he angrily replied, "that though he admitted the right of enquiry, he denied the expediency of it, where overbalanced by the proposed good: and upon that principle he dissented from the present motion."

The war with France was now become a new centre of political attraction, that drew to it every question that could be stirred
without

without or moved within the Senate. The condemnation of Messrs. Muir and Palmer for fourteen years to Botany Bay had so affected the mind and feelings of Lord Stanhope, that he brought forward a motion in the House of Lords, praying his Majesty not to carry the sentence into execution, until that House had made a proper enquiry into the justice of all the proceedings against them. The Duke of Norfolk said, " that if the points stated and complained of by the noble Earl had been brought before them by petition, and supported by affidavit, he should have thought it his duty to go into the enquiry ; but they could not by the rules of the House entertain the question as brought forward in the motion." Mr. Sheridan in the Commons presented a petition from Mr. Palmer, humbly representing that the petitioner was suffering under what he conceived to be an illegal judgment of the Court of Justiciary of Scotland, from which there was no appeal to any other Court of Justice, and praying such relief as to the wisdom of the House should seem meet.

meet. The Chancellor of the Exchequer objected against a petition being received, which prayed the interposition of that House between the sentence of a competent Court and the execution of that sentence. The regular mode of proceeding would be to petition the Crown for mercy. Being however pressed by Mr. Fox not to give so deep a wound to the Constitution, as would be the refusal to hear the petition, as it was an universal principle that a petition may be presented to the King in Parliament, in other words to the Legislature, against the decision of any Court of Justice from which there was no appeal by law to another Court, he hesitated, and desired that the question might be adjourned : and after having been better informed, he profited of the warning of Mr. Fox, and consented to its being brought up : it was however of no avail to the unfortunate petitioner, who was soon after shipped off with his fellow sufferer for the place of his banishment. In the course of these debates many facts were advanced and not contradicted, though they
were

were alleged to be informally brought forward, respecting the proceedings of Messrs. Muir and Palmer's trials. Such were the admission of evidence to charges not contained in the indictment *, and the overruling of the strongest challenges of several of the jurors.

It has been generally represented and inculcated to the public, that the motions and speeches of Mr. Adam in the House of Commons, concerning the criminal law of Scotland, were made in consequence of the trials and sentences of Messrs. Muir, Palmer and others in the course of the preceding autumn. So far from this being the case, Mr. Adam had given his mind to this important and useful subject for several years, and in the last session of parliament, before any of those persons had even been

* The reason alleged for this by the Lord Advocate was, that if he had enumerated all the acts of the defendant in the indictment, it would have covered the walls of the Court: a mode of reasoning not very congenial with the laws of England.

indicted,

indicted, had given notice, that he meant early in this session to bring the matter before the House. The perspicuity, order and erudition which Mr. Adam displayed in opening this intricate and important subject to the House will transmit his professional fame to the latest posterity, whilst his grateful countrymen, who are sensible of true constitutional liberty, will ever cherish and bless his sympathetic exertions for their happiness. Unfortunate it is for Scotland, that a French war, and a dread of French principles, should have raised such a host of opponents against the extension of the most valuable boon of the English constitution to millions of his Majesty's northern subjects. The very statement of the objects the Hon. Member had in view, will prove them to be of too deep importance at least to North-Britain, to be blown into oblivion by these destructive blasts of alarm and fear: they will survive the storm, and send forth shoots with treble vigour.

Mr. Adam observed, that the notice he
had

had given in the last session was a proof that he was not influenced by subsequent events, but by general principles, in what he had already done and was now to do ; although those events had tended much to confirm all his former impressions, and he should hold himself at liberty to refer to them in illustration of his argument. The heads which he dwelt upon were—*Leasing-making*, according to the Scots law, the nature of the crime, and the extent of the punishment. *Sedition*, with its nature of punishment. The propriety of giving an appeal from the Scots criminal courts, not with a view to impeach former judgments, but to enquire how far there might be fit ground for the interference of the Legislature to grant such appeal in future. The expediency of granting a new trial, when error appeared upon the record, not in matter of law, but in matter of fact ; such for instance as refusing to the defendant the benefit of a witness's testimony on the allegation of incompetence, when that allegation was not well founded. In what manner Petty Juries were returned,

and

and what right of challenge was allowed to the prisoner. The power of the Lord Advocate to institute criminal prosecutions; and immediately connected with this head the expediency of granting to the subject in Scotland the protection of a Grand Jury. The power of the criminal courts to punish contempts, and the power of inferior courts to try criminal cases without the intervention of a jury.

In the course of this month, Major Maitland made a motion in the House of Commons, that an account be laid before that House of any officers, natives of foreign countries, now in service under the command of the Earl of Moira, and receiving British pay. It was seconded by Mr. Grey, who maintained that such officers could not be employed in British pay without the authority of Parliament. Mr. Secretary Dundas insisted upon the necessity of the Earl of Moira's using his discretion, and suppressing the names of any officers he might have under his command. The motion was negatived

gated without a division. It had however the good effect some time after of procuring from the Earl of Moira, in the House of Lords, some more certain and satisfactory information of his expedition to the coast of France than the public had before been in possession of. His Lordship gave a very candid, manly, and satisfactory detail of the reasons and circumstances under which he found it necessary to employ French officers and artilleryists; and very pathetically entreated the House not to call for and publish the names of the officers on account of their relatives in France, upon whom the vengeance of their executive government would probably fall if their names were made public.

On this occasion the noble Lord took an opportunity to retail some of the circumstances which related to his expedition to the coast of France. It appears that the original scheme and opportunity of succouring the Royalists, whilst it was feasible, had been by the delay or neglect of Ministers now irretrievably

retrievably lost. His Lordship had kept himself in constant readiness to undertake it. At last on the 17th of November he received his orders, and was himself ready at Portsmouth on the 22d : his Lordship attributes the delay of embarking till the 1st of December to the wind and weather, which prevented the frigates from coming round. He further vouched for the Ministers having received on the 25th of November by emissaries from the army of the Royalists near Dol on the coast of Brittany, all the signals that were to be made upon the arrival of the English fleet to point out the spot in which they were to make the descent. These emissaries had left the army on the 10th of November: consequently the orders to sail, which were only prevented by wind and weather, were given without any signals or certainty where the landing was to be effected. They arrived however in time to make every advantage of them six days before the sailing of the fleet. On the 2d of December at day-break they made the coast of Cherbourg, and sailed along the coast for

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several

several days without any signal being made; then in obedience to the orders he had received, he proceeded to Guernsey. Whilst he resided there, he sent many emissaries to the army of the Royalists, and by them first learnt that they had on the 14th of November made an attack upon Granville, and having been defeated had retired to the banks of the Loire. All the French Journalists however confessed that a large column had directed its course towards Caen in Normandy. A violent storm happening, and Guernsey roads being deemed unsafe, a part of the fleet was under the necessity of leaving them. On account of the information received relative to a column of the Royalists being on their march to Caen, he conceived it his duty to attempt to cooperate with them, expecting that the fleet which had left Guernsey roads would have been hovering about the mouth of Portsmouth harbour instead of having cast anchor. It was then however that he learnt the final disappointment of the projects of the Royalists army.

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I have been more minute in retailing these particulars of Lord Moira's expedition from his own statement of facts, merely to shew the little certainty and vague intelligence our Cabinet proceeded upon in fitting out such an armament, and exposing the conduct and credit of our officers and intrepidity of our men to such doubtful and hazardous attainments. Little reliance, alas ! could the commander of this expedition have had upon the intelligence of Ministers, if that of the republican news-papers could direct his measures. The expedition failed in every part, but that of establishing a very extensive staff, and opening a new field of patronage to the Minister for rewarding the converts to his prudent and efficient measures.

The dropping of Lord Moira's expedition to the coast of France seems to have alarmed our Government for the safety of their own. The terror which every where prevailed, bespoke even in the Ministers a decided preference of the energy of the
French

French Government above that of their own. So prevalent were the rumours of a threatened invasion from France, that the grand council of war, at which the famed Colonel Maek assisted, was believed to be convened upon this subject. It appears however probable, that the situation and future operations of our armies in Flanders and Brabant could alone have justified the admission of a foreign officer into such a council. Both the Duke of York and Colonel Maek had been present at the great council of war which was holden at Bruxelles in the beginning of this month, at which also were present the Prince of Cobourg, Clairfait, Colloredo, Seckendorff, and Walmoden. Soon after this council both Colonel Maek and his Royal Highness, who had arrived in England on the 8th of the month, returned to the continent. The whole prospect of success for the ensuing campaign rested in the confidence in Colonel Maek. Whatever his plans or advice may have been, I find no documents to justify me in laying at his door the disastrous result of the campaign, which was con-

ducted by other commanders. He certainly must have possessed the peculiar confidence of his sovereign, by accompanying his Imperial Majesty in his journey to the army and return to Vienna.

The French army under Pichegru began their grand movement by marching a column of 70,000 men against Valenciennes, whilst two other columns marched, one towards Le Quesnoy, the other to Marchiennes. His whole army was said to consist of 140,000 men. At the same time another army of 65,000 men marched into the duchy of Luxembourg, and seemed to threaten the principality of Liege, where internal tranquillity had never been perfectly restored since the last evacuation of it by the French.

To a reflecting mind it is a matter of more than curious speculation, to pass in review the immense armies that were now in actual movement either for the purpose of attaining one fixed and general, or several particular
dissembled

dissembled objects of the war. By the most authentic accounts we find at this period the republican armies of France amounting to the enormous number of 780,000 effective men, viz.

	Men.
The army of the North - -	220,000
The united armies of the Rhine and Moselle - - - - -	280,000
The army of the Alps - - -	60,000
The army of the Eastern Pyrennees	80,000
The army of the South - - -	60,000
The army of the West - - -	80,000
Total	780,000

It is also to be noticed, that this immense swarm of troops was brought into the field without having recourse to the men of the second requisition.

On the other hand, without reckoning the forces of Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, or Naples, we find the following statement of the combined forces brought into the field to

act against the French in the North and on the Rhine, viz.

	Men.
Army under Prince Cobourg -	140,000
Ditto under the Duke of York -	40,000
The Dutch army - - - - -	20,000
Austrian army on the Rhine -	60,000
Prussian ditto - - - - -	64,000
Troops of the Empire - - -	20,000
Emigrant corps under Prince Condé	12,000
Total	356,000

To these numerous armies must be also added the forces of the Royal party in the Vendée, as well as those British and Hessian troops which were destined under Lord Moira to co-operate with them. These armed Royalists, though their numbers cannot precisely be ascertained, may be said to be the only part of the combined armies who had a determinate object in view, which even success in their exertions could attain. For it is obvious, that if a counter revolution
in

in France were the real object of this mighty confederacy of armed princes, the efforts of the Royalists alone could effectuate it. The reluctance, inertness and indecision then of our Cabinet to invigorate and protect this party, are strong proofs of their insincerity in forwarding the cause they had undertaken. It is not by the actual situation or appearances of the Royalists at any particular given time, that the policy or possibility of our co-operating with them is to be judged. We find from the report of Barrere concerning them at the very time that Lord Moira was waiting to co-operate with them at Guernsey, that their force was reduced almost to 7000 men; and so convinced did the French nation then appear to be of the absolute extinction of the party, that the reporter expressly says from the Committee of Public Welfare, "that they expect it will be the last time that they shall speak to the Convention of that disgraceful part of the republic." Whatever grounds there might have been for making such a particular report at this time, we find within

four days Carrier, who had been sent on a particular commission into these departments, giving a more circumstantial and interesting account of the war in the Vendée, by which we are enabled to speak more decisively of the possibility (had there been the desire on our part) to have worked up that determined force into an efficient instrument to bring about a counter revolution in France.

The reporter expressly says, that at that time there was no longer any collected force besides that of Stoffel composed of 800 men, and that of Charet which was computed to be 3000 men. But, adds he, “ do
 “ not therefore imagine these are the only
 “ banditti; there are more in the forests, on
 “ the mountains, and hiding places, to the
 “ number of 20,000 men. We were long un-
 “ acquainted, said he, with the number of the
 “ banditti. When the patriots encountered
 “ at Saumur, or any other place, ten, twenty
 “ or thirty thousand, they imagined it was
 “ the whole: but they were grossly deceived,
 “ since there were sixteen districts in full re-
 “ volt,

“ volt, and the inhabitants of the whole
“ country between the Loire and the sea,
“ from Painbœuf to Saumur, a space of
“ more than forty square leagues, in arms.

“ The rebels were divided into several
“ columns. Whenever they wanted rein-
“ forcements, they sounded the alarm-bell,
“ and set the mills a-going, whose sails served
“ for signals ; and immediately a vast force
“ was collected.

“ In this large tract of country, every in-
“ habitant was provided with a gun and a
“ sabre, with which he armed himself on
“ the first signal. When the danger or the
“ alarm was over, they returned to their oc-
“ cupations and the cultivation of their
“ lands, so that the whole of the country in
“ revolt is sown, and promises a rich har-
“ vest ; but it is only by republicans that it
“ will be reaped.”

So lately even as in the preceding month
of August, the reporter owns that the rebels
had

had 150,000 men in arms, which with the possession of a country richly cultivated, of 120 square miles, would certainly have afforded by proper co-operation the ready means either of offensive or defensive operations. But when they had been harassed and reduced by frequent attacks, in one of which they lost upwards of 20,000 men according to their own accounts, and were almost reduced to absolute extinction, then was it that the vigilance and zeal of our active Cabinet sent out an expedition to co-operate with them in offensive operations.

It may be clearly indicated from the Duke of Brunswick's letter to the King of Prussia on his resignation of the supreme command, what were the real sentiments of those persons who had the surest opportunity of forming them upon real facts. For it is not to be imagined, that such pointed and important reflections made by a person of the Duke of Brunswick's talents and experience, should not have operated some effect, if not upon the mind and intentions,

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at least upon the conduct and language of the King of Prussia. When we look back to the particular events and general issue of the two preceding campaigns, no man can hesitate to conclude that the Prussian Monarch took more to heart, and did more to effect the weakening of the House of Austria, than the crushing of the nascent republic of France : and if this letter do not acquit the Duke of Brunswick of privacy and co-operation in the designs of this treacherous Monarch, it will however hand down to posterity in its proper colouring the blackness of his perfidy, which already stands in the face of Europe as a known political truth.

His Imperial Majesty delivered in at the Diet at Ratisbon, a note to demand the sense of the German States respecting the necessity of arming all the inhabitants on the frontiers of Germany, and of furnishing a triple contingent on the part of the said States ; and as Chief of the Empire, he requested the advice of his co-estates, not only respecting the general arming of the inhabitants

inhabitants of the Germanic frontiers, but also the means of coercion to be employed against such of the members, who had not fulfilled the obligations imposed upon them by the decree of the Diet on the twenty-third of November 1792, for effectually furnishing their triple contingents. Determinately reluctant were those States to enter into this armed confederacy; they could discover in it no general object of advantage, nor were they allured to it by particular views of present or future interest. The general arming of the Germanic frontiers would have been a measure too effectual to stop the further progress of the French, to have answered the treacherous designs of the King of Prussia; he accordingly opposed it in the Diet, and published a manifesto of his reasons for it. Sensible however that his conduct since the commencement of hostilities would neither stand the test of impartial scrutiny, nor render plausible any further treachery, he had recourse to the last stale shift of hypocrisy, self-proclaimed innocence

and purity of intention. Therefore in a declaration which he delivered to the States of the anterior circles assembled at Frankfurt he said, that, “ confident that his designs were pure, he might pass over such rumours, and content himself with the conviction, that they would find no belief on the part of the well-disposed States of the Empire : but to give an overplus of satisfaction, and to confound the malevolent who invent similar stories purposely, and perhaps to excite distress, his Majesty declared, that whilst he made war upon the French, he had never any view but the defence of the Germanic Empire, and the maintenance of the constitution.”

The zeal of our Cabinet for the extension of this armed confederacy seemed to sanction every sort of insult that could be put upon any State which had the firmness and policy of preserving itself in a state of neutrality. This produced from the Secretary of State to the Most Serene Government of Genoa a very spirited remonstrance to Mr. Drake,

Drake, the British Consul at that Court ; in which he expressed with surprise and grief the hostile practices of British subjects within the sovereignty of their State, for which he declared, that a full satisfaction for the aggressions committed by his Majesty's subjects was expected from the Court of St. James.

The only quarter of the globe in which the British arms seemed to promise any degree of success, was in the West Indies ; and yet here also the progress of our conquests seemed to be carried on upon a new principle of negotiation and treachery, rather than by that of the open and honourable means of public hostility. It appears that on the 9th of the month the commander of the British forces in St. Domingo had written from Fort Jeremie to La Vaux, the French commandant at port De Paix, not only to induce him to surrender the town and forts, upon false representations of the state and disasters of the French Republic, but had also offered him

in the name of the British Government a bribe of 5000 crowns French money, to be paid to him in person, or deposited in the Bank of England. The offer of this paltry sum of about 600 guineas roused the indignation of the Republican Governor, who rejected the offer with scorn; and he complained loudly of the indignity offered to him personally in the following manner: "Permit me now to complain to yourself of the indignity you have offered me in thinking me so vile, so flagitious, so base, as not to resent the offer of 5000 crowns Tournois. In this you have wronged yourself. I am a General; hitherto I have been worthy to command the army. You have endeavoured to dishonour me in the eyes of my comrades; this is an offence between you and me, for which you owe me satisfaction; I demand it in the name of honour, which must exist among all nations. Therefore, previous to any general action, I offer you a single combat till either of us fall, leaving to you the choice of arms, either on foot or

" horseback:

" horseback: then, if victorious, I shall
 " have proved myself worthy to command
 " Republicans: if I fall gloriously, the Re-
 " publican army will have another leader
 " still more formidable, and every indivi-
 " dual in the army will imitate my ex-
 " ample.

" Your quality of enemy in the name of
 " your nation, did not give you a right to
 " offer me a personal insult; as a private
 " person I ask satisfaction for an injury done
 " me by an individual."

What true Englishman does not blush to
 be thus addressed by his enemy in arms?
 " Our two nations have often made war
 " with each other, but always with equal
 " weapons; cease then to attack us by ten-
 " ders of money; let us be equally gene-
 " rous, let us contend in honourable hosti-
 " lity, and let us scorn the arts of seduction."
Pudet hæc opprobria nobis, &c. Yet this is
 that enemy of whom Mr. Burke has said,
The mode of civilized war will not be practised;

nor

nor are the French, who act upon the present system, entitled to expect it. Let us not undervalue the virtue we dare not imitate. Fas est & ab hoste doceri.

CHAPTER III.

MARCH.

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attacking the Enemy—Differences between the Duke of York and the Austrian Generals—Successes in the West Indies, under Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis—No Opposition in Ireland—Lenity towards the Irish at Bourdeaux.

Too much credit and praise cannot be given to the Ministry that is provident in foreseeing and vigorous in preparing for the offensive and defensive operations of the campaign ; but when at the opening of it the most violent and unprecedented measures of domestic police are brought forward, the nation, even in the moment of cordial co-operation in the war, must reflect how far they tend to ensure success, or even to soften the failure of our arms. The infusion of terror and alarm into the multitude seems to have been the grand panacea of our Cabinet against all possible qualms and loathings at the draughts they so rashly prescribed. The Minister not satisfied with the peaceable and passive concurrence of the nation in raising such levies and supplies as his wild, extensive

and unattainable projects required, more artfully than justifiably entrapped the greatest part of the community to commit themselves by the most direct and voluntary act of approbation of his measures. He first worked up to the highest degree their already fermented dreads of foreign invasion and domestic insurrection, and then seduced them into voluntary subscriptions for increasing the military establishment at home. The immediate effect which was proposed by the advisers of this measure seemed not to be the repulsion of an invading enemy, or the crushing of a domestic rebel, but to supply the Minister with a ready answer to such as might hereafter reprobate the failure, and call upon him to account for the pernicious consequences of this ruinous war. Nothing can so blunt the edge of reproach as personal sanction and co-operation in the disastrous measure.

A paper had been issued from the Treasury by way of recommendation from his Majesty to the people to stand forth and
assist

assist the executive government with voluntary subscriptions. A part of the proposed plan was brought forward by the Minister for the increase of the militia. Mr. Baker said in the House of Commons, that the measure was by no means adequate to the purpose for which it was avowedly brought forward. It was said to be a provision for a danger which threatened the country: if the danger were imminent our force ought to be equal to it: but above all the provision made against the danger should be *legal*. Voluntary subscriptions, and the unparliamentary application of them, were *illegal*; Parliament was the only *legal* organ of the country, through which the people should consent to the carrying on any measure which was ultimately to be paid for out of the public purse. Mr. Fox also strenuously opposed this measure of voluntary contributions, as absolutely illegal, and supereminently dangerous to the Constitution. Nay, two of the staunchest advocates for the war, Messrs. Adair and Powys, had the candour and firmness on this occasion to side with

Messrs. Baker and Fox, in declaring it to be *illegal* to raise men by voluntary subscriptions without the consent of Parliament.

Upon this subject Lord Lauderdale, in the House of Peers, prefaced by a very learned and animated discourse, the following motion :—*That it is a dangerous and unconstitutional measure for the people of this country to grant to the executive government any private aid, benevolence, or subscription, for public purposes, without the consent of Parliament.* The motion was violently opposed by Lords Grenville and Hawkesbury*, and others, who contended for the legality of the measure. The motion was gotten rid of by the previous question, on

* In the course of this debate Lord Stanhope had commended some doctrines which he quoted from a book written about twenty-seven years ago by Mr. Charles Jenkinson, not in precise *unison* with the speech of Lord Hawkesbury on that day. The noble Baron entreated Lord Stanhope to be sparing in his eulogy of Mr. Jenkinson's compositions, which Lord Hawkesbury, from change of circumstances, now reprobated.

which

which the Chancellor made a very elaborate speech, the general purport of which was to prove that the reality of the fact was not comprized in the motion before the House. He was wary of committing himself upon the illegality of such a measure as was described or alluded to in the motion ; but roundly asserted, that whatever had been done by Ministers respecting these voluntary contributions, from the issuing of the circular letters from the Secretary of State to the Lords Lieutenants, down to the county meetings that had been convened in consequence of them, was *legal, constitutional, expedient, and proper*. To whatever bent the tide of opinion on the present occasion turned, certain it is that when the same measures were heretofore brought forward in Parliament, the minds of some of our leading patriots were not then warped as at this fatal hour we find them to have been. The late Lord Camden declared, that the opening of private subscriptions for raising men at the London Tavern in 1778 was *daringly illegal and truly alarming* ;

ing ; and that the Committees both at London and Bristol for raising money to be disposed of as his Majesty should think fit, had assumed a legislative power, and had acted in that capacity in which the Parliament only were empowered to act, agreeably to the spirit of the Constitution, and the meaning of the Bill of Rights. Of the like sentiment was Mr. Wilkes, on the 2d of April 1778, when he said, that nothing could be more alarming to the acknowledged rights and privileges of the House of Commons than the doctrines lately propagated, and the practice begun of *giving aids, benevolences and subscriptions for public purposes to the Crown without the sanction of Parliament.*

The opponents of this stratagem of inveigling individuals into an express approbation of the public measures by their private and pecuniary support of them, not only reprobated it upon the ground of its illegality, but upon the unfair and unconstitutional colouring which was attempted to be thrown upon all recusants and dissenters

senters from the measure. They loudly
 complained in Parliament, "that in the
 "present war beyond any former war*,
 "the Ministers had an extraordinary power
 "of punishment for all those who disap-
 "proved of their measures; every one who
 "spoke, wrote, or signified in any way his
 "disapprobation, was branded with the
 "name of Jacobin, Rebel, Traitor, and
 "every term of opprobrium that could be
 "added." That in forwarding and pro-
 moting the present subscriptions every spe-
 cies of lure and intimidation was played
 off in the different counties to augment the
 number of subscribers; for, from the return
 of names in some counties, there appeared
 every reason to imagine that more solici-
 tude was entertained for the subscription of
 the name than the actual payment of the
 money subscribed for. In the Surry meet-
 ing, which was headed by Lord Onslow's
 liberal beneficence of 1000l. there occurred a

* Debates in the Lords, March 28, 1794—Lord
 Lauderdale's speech.

circum-

circumstance which, though never traced up to the original source, sufficiently proved the nature of the spirit by which a great part of the meeting was taught or directed to act.

In the early part of the day of meeting the following paper was circulated through the town, and delivered to those who came into it :

“ A WORD TO THE WISE,

“ *Addressed to all true Lovers of their King
“ and Country, in the County of Surry.*

“ In the year 1745 it was proved, that all
“ those who had opposed the subscriptions
“ for raising an armed force to protect the
“ King and Country, were the most inveterate
“ Republicans, and did all in their
“ power to overturn both ; and it may be
“ so in the year 1794.

“ Him whom the cap fits, let him wear it.

“ N.B. Mr. Fox approves of no subscriptions but for himself.”

The

The Minister, when he was first pressed by Mr. Sheridan in the House of Commons to communicate to them the recommendations from the Secretary of State to the Lords Lieutenants of the different counties upon this subject of voluntary subscriptions, peremptorily refused ; but upon maturer reflection he at last consented : and upon several of the Members expressing with warmth and astonishment their indignation at the insult offered to that House, in being postponed to every county meeting in the consultations upon the propriety, means and necessity of raising men for the defence of the State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, with much *sang froid*, that it was his intention to lay the whole of what had been done before the House in a message from the Throne on the next day. This species of anticipating the opinion of the House of Commons, and pledging to the public their subsequent assent, is peculiar to Mr. Pitt's administration. It certainly is no conclusive proof of the Minister's

ster's deference for the opinion of the House of Commons, however it may ground a fair presumption of their ductibility to every proposition that he might bring forward,

His Majesty's message to the two Houses of Parliament, which Mr. Pitt had promised, was conceived in general terms, and did not even hint at any voluntary subscriptions for raising men. " His Majesty thought proper to acquaint the House, that for the purpose of more effectually guarding against the attempts of the enemy to execute their projected design of invading the kingdom, he had augmented his land forces, fundry parts of which he was to assemble speedily in different parts of the kingdom, where it might be necessary; and he relied upon the cordial support of his Parliament, and the zeal and affection of his people, that they would co-operate with him in such measures as might be necessary for the general security." It tended

tended however to deepen the impression of a French invasion. The addresses to his Majesty upon his gracious message were opposed in both Houses upon the same grounds; the words objected to in the address were, *just and necessary war*. The grand object of the Minister was, to impress upon the people so strong a dread and alarm of a foreign invasion, as to assent to the necessity of these most extraordinary measures. No subject was so warmly debated during the session as the legality of these voluntary subscriptions. From what dropped in the course of the debates from several Members, it appeared evident, that although they thought this method of raising men illegal and unconstitutional, yet they fancied themselves committed to support every possible question of the Minister, and therefore they eased their scruples by voting for the previous question.

Whatever may be the convictions, the enthusiasm, or the infatuation of these systematic zealots, who approve or at least support

support whatever measures the Minister proposes, it is to be expected that some individuals both within and without the Senate are to be found, who cannot thus blindly accommodate their judgment, nor basely sacrifice their principles to the arbitrary dictates of any set of men. A peculiarity of the most extraordinary kind has indeed attended almost every measure of this undigested and rueful maze of disasters ; no possible motive or incentive to the war has been unapplied by its advocates to launch every class of people unreservedly into the hopeless gulph ; the defence, glory, and propagation of the sacred religion of Christ, and the establishment of every principle of truth, justice, and morality are displayed, like the sacred labarum of Constantine, in opposition to the impious oriflame of French liberty and equality. These opposite devices naturally invite us to examine into the consistency of the combatants under their banners. Far be it from me to judge of the justice of any cause, by the issue or success of human events !

The

The Earl of Stanhope summoned the Lords to attend on a particular day, on which he meant to bring forward a motion that to him appeared of the highest national consequence. He had noticed in the preceding week an observation in that House, that if it were possible to engage any considerable number of Frenchmen to excite an insurrection or rebellion in France against the National Convention, no possible expence which it could cost this country ought to be spared, and that it was a measure which ought to be adopted by the British Government. This appeared to his Lordship so abhorrent to all true policy, to genuine religion, and even to common humanity; so contrary to the principles of civilized war, and so outrageous to all the feelings that ought to govern the conduct of a people, that he thought it his duty to vindicate the character of the nation from the horror of the sentiment, and to disclaim it by a solemn parliamentary act, declaring it "to be felony, without benefit of clergy, "to make any attempts to engage French-

“ men or others to stir up insurrection or
 “ rebellion in France; or to interfere at all
 “ in the internal concerns of that nation.”
 This motion, like most other of this noble
 Earl's motions, was negatived without a
 division. The Earl of Mansfield was the
 Peer who had made the observation and he
 avowed and gloried in it. Lord Grenville
 admired his noble friend for acknowledging
 with becoming dignity a sentiment to which
 he was surprised that any one should object.
 Though the decision of the House of Peers
 be in certain cases conclusive as a Supreme
 Court of Judicature, it does not in all its acts
 command this undeniable authority.

There are men, and some respectable
 Englishmen, who think with the Earl of
 Stanhope, that open hostilities cannot justify
 the encouragement of the crime of
 treason and rebellion: that the shedding, or
 causing the shedding of blood in the massacres
 and assassinations inseparable from
 insurrections and commotions, is not justifiable
 either by the law of God or man:
 that

that in the line of morality, the Creator, who has given to man the power of locomotion, and confined his residence to no given spot upon earth, has imposed upon all human beings a conscientious and indispensable obligation of *obeying the powers that are* in every community in which they may find themselves. In a word, that hired missionaries for destroying governments by blood, rapine and terror, would be as little honourable to Great Britain, as was Jean de Brie's proposed list of twelve hundred pensioned regicides to be dispersed throughout Europe, for the purpose of raising insurrections and commotions in every state by the massacre of their Sovereigns.

To such a pitch of certainty was the issue of every possible question in the House of Commons now brought, that the few virtuous members, who had the energy to stand at the breach in defence of the rights and welfare of the people, were reduced to the galling mortification of seeing their motions answer no other purpose than a per-

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petuation

petuation to posterity of their principles and sentiments, like the protests of dissenting Peers in the House of Lords. Thus, when the ferment of the present day shall have subsided into calm reflection, will be found upon the Journals the string of motions made by Mr. Whitbread, expressive of the disgrace and mischief brought upon this country by the ill-advised alliances which his Majesty had lately entered into with certain continental powers : there will also in that day be found amongst the debates of the House, the humane, eloquent, and truly political speech of Colonel Fitzpatrick, which forced reluctant commendation from the Minister, by which he introduced a motion “ for presenting an address to his Majesty, to represent to him that it appeared “ to the House, that the detention of General La Fayette, Alexander Lameth, Bureau de Pusy, and La Tour Maubourg in “ prison, by order of his Majesty’s ally the “ King of Prussia, was injurious to his Majesty and the cause of his allies ; and humbly to beseech his Majesty most graciously

“ to intercede in such a manner as to his
 “ Royal wisdom shall seem most proper for
 “ the deliverance of these unhappy persons.”

He directed not his speech to the feelings or humanity of the House, but rested the strength of his reasoning upon the policy and justice of the country. He in vain appealed to the consistency of the Minister to support the motion, as he had on a former day formally in his place disclaimed, on the part of the Executive Government of this country, any share in the iniquitous transaction. The Minister flew off, Mr. Burke thundered out a new philippic against the French revolution, and the House negatived the motion by a majority of 153 against 48.

There may indeed have been at this time fresh and peculiar reasons to prevent our Cabinet from applying with any degree of confidence to his Majesty of Prussia; for even Ministers began, though tardily and reluctantly, to believe that his Prussian Majesty was withdrawing himself from the

grand confederacy against the French Republic, meaning only to furnish, as Elector of Brandenburg, his contingent of twelve or fifteen thousand men for the defence of the Empire.

The turn and situation of affairs which gave occasion to the Duke of Brunswick's resignation, and prompted him to write the before-cited letter to the King of Prussia, drove his Majesty to the necessity of attempting many things, either the more plausibly to disguise his pretended project, or the more effectually to forward his real designs. He first demanded of the Diet of Ratisbon the payment of a considerable sum of money *, which he pretended to be due to him from the German Empire, on account of the assistance he had given to it in the war at the time of the Spanish succession. He then wrote to the Elector of Mentz to convene the Six Frontier Circles, to induce them to undertake the provisioning of

* About 2,000,000 of florins.

his army, which he must otherwise immediately withdraw from the defence of the Empire. Immediately after this a negotiation at Francfort between French Commissioners and some Prussian Officers gave grounds for reports, that the exchange of prisoners was neither the only nor the chief object of their mission. The French Commissioners on this occasion made a more open and pompous entry into Francfort than they had ever done on any other occasion since the establishment of the Republic ; they used a sumptuous carriage of the late King Louis XVI. on which they had painted the cap of liberty over the ancient escutcheon of the fleurs de lys. The important negotiations between the Prussian and Austrian Ministers at Vienna had broken off, upon the peremptory refusal of the latter to accede to the exorbitant demands of the former, though they were seconded and supported by the British Minister.

His Prussian Majesty now declared openly
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from Berlin to the Germanic Body, “ that
 “ having fulfilled all his obligations as ally
 “ and co-member, and perceiving that the
 “ Court of Vienna and the Diet of Ratisbon
 “ had misinterpreted his intentions, and de-
 “ clined complying with his just demands,
 “ he found himself, in the present state of
 “ things, under the necessity of withdrawing
 “ and recalling into his own states the sur-
 “ plus of the contingent of 20,000 men, which
 “ he was obliged by virtue of the treaty of
 “ alliance, and as Prince of the Empire,
 “ to employ against the common enemy.”

He accordingly gave orders for the whole of his army (except these 20,000 men) to quit the environs of Mentz, and march towards Cologne. It is remarkable, that this corps of 20,000 men was left under the command of General Kalkreuth, who was the person that negotiated with the French Commissioners at Francfort. These are some of the many honourable traits of his Prussian Majesty's good faith and sincerity, so congenial with the sentiments of our Cabinet, that induced them to recommend to
 his

his Majesty the treaty with the Court of Berlin, which I shall speak of in the ensuing chapter.

The different circumstances which operated the defection of the Prussian Monarch from the general confederacy, seem to have inspired the Neutral States of Europe to speak a more decisive language than they had hitherto dared to use upon the subjects of their own independency and the unalienable rights of neutrality. The causes which provoked their resentment and indignation so particularly against our Government, were certainly neither few nor trivial. By the directions of our Cabinet, nearly 250 vessels of Sweden and Denmark had been seized, under pretence of preventing supplies from being carried to France: and from the latest accounts from America, which were conveyed in a very angry tone, it appears that between two and three hundred of their ships had been captured by our cruizers and privateers amongst the Windward and Leeward Islands, indepen-

dent of those carried into Jamaica and the Bahama Islands, as well as of those brought into our ports in Europe. The natural and unavoidable consequence of such outrages upon the independent rights of neutral powers, was the formation of an armed neutrality. Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Venice entered into a negotiation for maintaining the rights of nations against the insults and encroachments of the Belligerent Powers; and to this confederacy they invited the States of America, Florence, Genoa, and all others who had suffered from the insolence and tyranny of any of the powers at war. What the particular indemnification demanded by America is, we as yet know not, for the losses incurred by subjects of the United States: certain however it is, that our Cabinet has openly abandoned the principles upon which the greatest part of their vessels have been captured; and we have every reason to believe them ready to allow an indemnification as large as shall be demanded: ready to load their overburthened country with the

the wanton payment of probably more than two millions, merely to screen from responsibility the improvident and headstrong measures of their own rash advising. Any counter security in the value of the condemned prizes against the payments, which must thus ultimately be made by Government, might reasonably indeed be wished, but is not to be expected. Their Danish and Swedish Majesties entered into a convention, for the common defence of the liberty and safety of the Danish and Swedish commerce and navigation. It was to last during the war, and to be supported and enforced by an armed force, and reprisals in case of need.

In America frequent and heavy complaints were made to Congress of the injuries suffered in their trade by almost every State of the Union. Their President Mr. Washington stated to Congress at the beginning of this month, that "the Secretary of State had reported to him upon the several complaints which had been
" lodged

“lodged in his office, against the vexations and spoliations on their commerce since the commencement of the European war, a copy of which report he submitted to their consideration.”

Six days after this statement, the Congress passed a resolution for laying an embargo on all ships and vessels in the ports of the United States, whether already cleared out or not, bound to any foreign port or place, for the term of thirty days. These different acts of different States fully bespoke their sense of the conduct of Great Britain towards them.

Little was it to be wondered at, when, as the Duke of Brunswick observed, the coalesced armies were acting without *any fixed plan, without unanimity and without principle*, that their enemies should be encouraged to forward their plans of offensive operations. And we now began to be effectually sensible of the advantages which our indecision and disunion afforded to the enemy. In Jersey, the Commander in

in Chief caused the States to be assembled, to communicate to them the intelligence he had received, that the enemy had actually collected in force on the adjacent coasts, with the avowed plan of making a descent: and he added, that they announced that they were invited over by the inhabitants. Whether this proclamation were made through a real apprehension of danger by the Commander, or merely to fill up the Grand Cabinet concert of alarm, is rather uncertain: for within a fortnight from this time, a report was made, that they had five thousand men under arms in each of the islands: and such a good look-out was kept, that it was impossible they should be surprised; so that, with the uncommon natural strength of the islands, there was nothing to fear.

The armies in Flanders were during the greatest part of this month absolutely inactive: not only the indecision and differences of the Generals, but the unprecedented

dented prevalence of disease in the different corps at this time, prevented any active operations. The general return of the sick and wounded in the Austrian army in Brabant alone, amounted to the incredible number of 23,400 men. General Clairfait however attempted an attack upon one of the enemy's columns, which seemed to be threatening Maritime Flanders; he failed in the attempt, and was so closely pressed by the French in his retreat, that he was driven to the destructive measure of inundating the country around Furnes.

Some time after this, a very unfortunate circumstance happened, as one of the many fatal consequences of want of union in the allied cabinets and armies. A general Council of War was convened at Ath, in which General Haddick from Vienna brought forward the plans of the ensuing campaign, as settled by that Court. One part of these plans was, that General Clairfait should command the ad-
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vanced army over the Duke of York. To this his Royal Highness peremptorily objected: serious discussions took place; and notwithstanding the warmest efforts of Prince Charles and Lord Elgin to intermediate, personal altercations arose to such an height, that the Duke of York declared that the British troops should not act till he had taken the directions of his Court. Lord Elgin accordingly, after a long conference with his Royal Highness, set off for England. The Duke insisted upon continuing Commander in Chief of the British Troops under Prince Cobourg; and as he never did afterwards act under General Clairfait, it is to be presumed, either that the settlement of the plans by the Court of Vienna was made without any attention to the interests or councils of that of St. James; or that the Imperial Ministers had even then some pecuniary or subsidiary views in giving up so readily an object of that importance to the success of the campaign.

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It is the pride of an Englishman to reflect, that when his countrymen are once removed from the ever varying controul of an indecisive cabinet, and the cabals and diffidence of a discordant federacy, they meet with that success which their unthwarted conduct and unchecked ardour will ever entitle them to. We find the happy consequences of unanimity in the prosperous expedition of Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis in the West-Indies; which in some measure did away the disgrace and mischief of our failures in the same quarter the year before. Sir Charles Grey, in the space of about three weeks, completely reduced and made himself master of the valuable Island of Martinico. What added much to the satisfaction of the conquest was the little blood it cost: for out of an army of 10,000 men, which he landed, he did not lose 400 in the expedition. We read with sympathetic joy and exultation this gallant officer's accounts of the spirit, unanimity and perseverance of the navy and army, which
were

were never more conspicuous, nor more cordial. "In a word," says he, "the General and all the Field Officers, as well as the commanding officers of corps, have set such an example of zeal, activity and animation on this service, which has been so laudably imitated by all the officers and soldiers of this little army, that they merit the greatest praise. Admiral Sir John Jervis's professional knowledge never shone with more lustre, nor ever was exceeded: nor can I sufficiently extol the promptness with which he has aided the land forces on every occasion, and his unremitting exertions to promote the honour of his Majesty's arms, and the interest of his country, in which he has been so eminently supported by the abilities and exertions of all the officers and seamen under his command."

Our successes were multiplied in this western quarter of the globe by the capture of Tiberoon, by Colonel Whitelock, and

and the surrender of the united parishes of Leogane and Arcalahaye and Jean de Rabel in the Island of St. Domingo.

The prorogation of the Parliament of Ireland, almost without a debate, bespoke the most unreserved and unconditional adoption of the present system of measures. Nothing surely could more emphatically answer the views of the Minister, than this passive submission to all his commands. Some malicious persons however augured a very different spirit in the people at large, from what the conduct of their Parliament bespoke, from a late instance of lenity shewn by the French Convention to the persons and property of all Irishmen at Bourdeaux, whilst Englishmen remained confined in prisons, and their property under confiscation.

CHAPTER IV.

 APRIL.

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First Part of the Conquest of the Kingdom of Corsica—Prussian Treaty for 62,400 Men—His Majesty empowered to employ any Number of Frenchmen in the Service—The Emperor arrives in the Netherlands—Is inaugurated Duke of Brabant—Siege of Landrecies—General Attack upon the French Lines—Favourable Opportunity for the French to rise against their Government, when our Army was victorious on their Territory—Landrecies taken—Turn of the Campaign—French Successes against Beau-lieu—Successes in the Pyrenees—Capture of Oneglia, the Key to the Sardinian Territories—Capture of St. Lucia and Guadaloupe—Acquittal of Mr. Walker, of Manchester—Dunn the principal Evidence against him committed for Perjury.

THIS month properly opens the third act of the tragedy, which we are now exhibiting to Europe. Our experienced ma-

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nagers,

nagers, with proper attention to stage effect, in order to prepare the minds of the spectators for the catastrophe, and carry them properly through the immense variety of intrigue plot and incident, amused us with the entertaining interlude of the Conquest of the Kingdom of Corsica. The retreating Hero of Toulon had been industriously working up the machinery and decorations for the first scene of this entertainment, ever since he had evacuated Toulon and retired from the Island of Hieres: and in a very minute and profuse bill of fare he favoured the public with an account of the first achievements of the piece, a lively representation of the battering of the impenetrable tower of Mortella, the scaling of the inaccessible heights of Fornelli, and the storming of the impregnable town of Fiorenzo.

Flushed with these accounts of our foreign successes, Mr. Pitt pledged himself to the House of Commons, that *except in the single*

single instance of Dunkirk, he was ready to maintain that the British arms had been eminently successful. Upon the strength then of these imaginary advantages, did it become the fashion of the day to treat with levity and disdain the defection of the Prussian Monarch from the general confederacy. It was however found necessary for the expectation and satisfaction of the public, that the principal character should not be wholly withdrawn from the piece. Accordingly a negotiation was opened with the King of Prussia, for the purchase of a body of his troops to be taken into British pay, and employed against France.

By the first article of this famous treaty between the King of Prussia, the King of Great Britain, and the States General of the United Provinces, his Prussian Majesty engaged to furnish an army, which should be composed of sixty-two thousand four hundred men, to be under a Prussian Commander; to act most suitably to the interests of the Maritime Powers; to arrive

at the place of their destination on the 24th day of May 1794, or sooner if possible; and to be completely provided with field-pieces and carriages, and also with tents and all military equipments necessary for taking the field.

The terms which this treaty uses to express the motives which induced his Prussian Majesty to demand the subsidy or salary, are worthy of notice—*In order to facilitate to his Prussian Majesty the means of acting with vigour, and conformably to the sentiments of zeal and concern with which he is animated for the common cause.* The treaty was made to last only during the year 1794, from the day of its date (viz. April 14th 1794); and the following payments were to be made to him, viz. 300,000l. for starting, and 100,000l. for returning to the Prussian territories; 50,000l. subsidy to be paid monthly; and another monthly payment of 1l. 12s. per man, for the bread and forage of this mercenary

nary army. The whole payment therefore for eight months and a half amounted to about the sum of 1,675,000*l.* sterling: of this sum Holland bound herself by a separate treaty to pay 400,000*l.* as her quota part of the whole subsidy. So well satisfied indeed were the contracting powers with the advantageous terms of this treaty, that although their High Mightinesses pleaded their want of power to extend it beyond the current year; yet it was stipulated by a separate article, that their Britannic and Prussian Majesties, being desirous of continuing the effect of the aforesaid engagement until the end of the war, might enter into further concert, as well between themselves as with their High Mightinesses, for the renewal of the present treaty for so long as the war should last, on the same conditions as are therein declared with respect to the troops, to their employment, and to the payment of the aforesaid subsidies, as well as to the providing bread and forage.

How far this country may still be desirous

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of

of profiting of the proviso for renewal with this reasonable and trusty contractor, I cannot ascertain. Let those who boast of our successes attribute to the exertions of this subsidized auxiliary what victories and advantages they cannot establish their own claim unto. Let it not however be readily forgotten, that each soldier of Prussia was hired at the exorbitant rate of more than two shillings per day. It is presumed that our æconomical Minister made his bargain according to the rate of fervour and activity stipulated for by these venal propagators of truth, order and religion. Supereminent truly must be their merits and services in the great cause, if appraised by the rate of their hire. Yet it is a fact notorious to all Europe, that in the armies of the great Frederick the annual maintenance of one Prussian scarcely exceeded the fourth part of that of a British soldier.

So deeply had we now plunged into this fatal warfare, that from accessaries and allies we had become principals, and held out the
English

English Exchequer as the common ærarium of all Europe, for folding every wild, needy and desperate adventurer in the crusade against France.

With this view did the Chancellor of the Exchequer bring forward a Bill to enable his Majesty to employ subjects of France on the Continent of Europe, in the French West-India Islands, in Guernsey, Jersey, and other places. This was opposed by several gentlemen of the minority as an unconstitutional measure, particularly on the following grounds: because their numbers were to be unlimited; because they were to be allowed to land in the island of Great-Britain as a place of rendezvous for health, exercise, &c. For it would be doubly unsafe to trust to an army completely prepared for the field and circumstanced as they would be in this country, either from their being under martial law and at the exclusive disposal of the executive power, or from the desperate nature of the circumstances which had put arms in their hands. To some it

appeared an open and direct avowal on our part, that the present object of the war was the restoration of the ancient despotism of France ; a false and dangerous principle to hold out, after repeated disavowals of any such views, and the late proclamation from Toulon to re-establish the constitution of 1789. Mr. Sheridan opposed the Bill with uncommon energy, as the most unconstitutional measure hitherto brought forward by the Minister. Suppose, said he, an army of 50,000 armed Frenchmen on the coast of Essex, what power will there be in Parliament to stop any progress they may be tempted, seduced, or ordered to make ? He pathetically exhibited the inhuman and wretched situation to which by the Bill we reduced these unfortunate victims : we had boasted that their desperate situation would make them fight the better, by knowing that if taken they would be put to death : the inhumanity of this was shocking. And dare we retaliate ? (*Yes—Yes*, cried Mr. Burke.) Good Heaven ! replied Mr. Sheridan, the lives of millions may depend upon that
single

single word. This will introduce a system of human sacrifice all over Europe. He shuddered at the thought of sending these poor unfortunate beings into the field with halters round their necks as part of their military accoutrements. If such however were to be their desperate case, he promised hereafter to move some Resolutions, that these men should be entitled to half-pay, and to the distinction of human beings, instead of being sent into the field where if defeated they would be immediately hung like dogs. Lord Mulgrave and several other Ministerial Members defended the system of retaliation, and maintained it to be necessary in the present war. As Ministers were in no instance thwarted or prevented from adopting any of their measures, they will never attempt to call upon the Nation for indulgence or extenuation in their responsibility for their failure.

I am as little disposed as I am warranted to commend the good faith and sincerity of the King of Prussia, in the federacy against
France :

France : but I therefore incline the more to believe the truth of his assertions, when he attempts to gloss over his perfidy and breach of faith with an appeal to uncontroverted facts and undeniable positions. It is interesting to remark, how he announces to the States of Germany his secession as a principal from the war. He represents the French army, not, with our deluded Ministers, as a base, contemptible and ferocious rabble ; but, speaking from experience, *as a mass united and almost invincible, combining tactics with numbers and a well appointed artillery.* Against such an army were we now proceeding in the anticipated strength of our new hireling Prussian and fugitive Frenchmen. The Court of Vienna superadded to an immense number of its best troops and generals, the firmest pledge of expected success, the presence of their Imperial Sovereign.

His Imperial Majesty came into Brabant to take upon himself the command of his army under the immediate advice and direction of the all-promising Colonel Maek. His
 arrival

arrival in the Netherlands, and his inauguration as Duke of Brabant, seemed to diffuse the appearance of cordial joy, affection and loyalty through all ranks of his people : the personal affability and condescension of his general conduct seemed to have secured him a renovation of that popularity which had been so prodigally lavished upon the much loved and revered Maria Theresa. During his stay at Bruxelles he was very assiduous in attending to the real case and situation of the Netherlands : his consultations with his different Ministers, Metternich, Trautmanndorff, and the Chancellor Limpens, were almost daily : and before he went to the armies, his Imperial Majesty is reported to have declared to Count Colloredo, that he had been deceived by every person concerning the Brabanters, excepting his brother Prince Charles and Metternich.

The Emperor's arrival at the army threw a general glow of confidence and ardour through the lines ; and the frequent passing and repassing of artillery and ammunition

tion appeared to announce the immediate siege of all the French frontier towns at the same time. The French General however was so far from being inactive, that by the constant employment he afforded to the different commanders against whom he was acting, none of them could venture to quit their posts for the purpose of attending the Imperial inauguration at Bruxelles. The first movement of our troops, after his Imperial Majesty had reviewed them on the heights near Cateau in the Cambresis, was in eight different columns for making a general attack upon the enemy's lines for the ultimate purpose of investing the small town of Landrecies. The attack succeeded completely, and with trivial loss on the part of the combined armies. "The signal success that attended these extensive and complicated operations has," said the Duke of York in his dispatches, "determined his Imperial Majesty to begin immediately the siege of Landrecies ; and therefore the Hereditary Prince of Orange, who will have the direction of the siege, has moved with
 " the

“ the greatest part of his camp from Beau-
“ vais, and taken a position so as to com-
“ plete the investiture of the fortress, whilst
“ his Imperial Majesty with the grand army
“ covers the operations of the siege on the
“ side of Guize, and that under my imme-
“ diate command does the same towards
“ Cambray.” The siege of Landrecies was
continued; and before they had opened the
first batteries, an attack was advised to be
made on the enemy, who then occupied the
Camp of Cæsar, in which we completely
drove them back, and obliged them to re-
treat in great confusion into Cambray with
the loss of 1200 men killed in the field, and
three pieces of cannon taken. The French
however probably viewed this retreat of
their men in a different light from his
Royal Highness, who reported it. For he
informs us in his dispatches of the next day,
that “ at day-break the next morning the
“ enemy attacked him on all sides, and after
“ a short but severe conflict he succeed-
“ ed in repulsing them with considerable
“ slaughter. The enemy’s General Chapuy
“ was

“ was taken prisoner, and we were masters
 “ of 35 pieces of the enemy's cannon. The
 “ behaviour of the British cavalry has been
 “ beyond praise. The army under his Im-
 “ perial Majesty was attacked at the same
 “ time ; but they also repulsed them with
 “ great slaughter, and took 22 pieces of can-
 “ non.” Such were the prosperous and flat-
 tering hopes at the opening of this cam-
 paign, when the bulk of the combined forces
 were in the open country of the Cambresis,
 not above forty leagues from Paris, to which
 the road was open without any one fortified
 town to obstruct an army on their march,
 except St. Quentin and Peronne, both of
 which might be avoided, in case a free
 communication could have been kept up,
 and secured with that frontier which the
 combined armies then possessed. The most
 zealous advocate for the war could scarcely
 wish for a more favourable opportunity of
 marching an army up to Paris for the exter-
 mination of Jacobinism, than was now of-
 fered, and with such a protecting and for-
 midable force as was at this time even vic-
 torious

torious upon the French territory. Had it been the desire and wish of the people of France to rise against their republican Governors, as we have been taught and almost commanded to believe within the walls of St. Stephen's, we should have seen deputations crowding in to our Commanders from Cambray, St. Quentin and other neighbouring towns to be relieved and protected against their tyrannical rulers. A cool reference of the present situation of the combined armies to that in which they were at the close of the campaign, will be an useful lesson to those enthusiastic promoters of this rueful crusade, who are deaf to every reason of impracticability, blind to the most unsurmountable of difficulties, and dead to the sentiments of all political justice.

The turn of events towards the close of this month was as various as it was interesting to the Belligerent Powers. The surrender of Landrecies may properly be said to have terminated our short and unimportant career of success on the Continent.

ment. The previous loss however of Arlon, and the retreat of General Beaulieu with eighteen thousand men before the Republican army of Jourdain, was the first of their successes, which I shall retail in the following melancholy narrative of the declining lustre of the British arms in Europe. The French represented the successes of their army of the Ardennes as equal to their most sanguine expectations; they reported that they had fought for three days successively, and had killed above twelve hundred of the Austrians. Whoever reflects upon the steady conduct of the gallant veteran Beaulieu, and the intrepidity and conduct of the army under his command, will allow him the just tribute of praise for an orderly, though necessary, retreat; but he cannot deny the irresistible power of an enemy determined to carry a cause in which they have embarked every thing valuable and endearing in life.

Equal successes attended the Republican armies of the Eastern Pyrenees, under General

neral Dagobert, who was killed by a cannon ball before Puycerda. "In Italy, every day," said Barrere in the Convention, "is the herald of new victories, of which the capture of Oneglia was but the prelude." The port of Oneglia and the surrounding territory was at this crisis of infinite consequence to the French, being the key of the Sardinian territories in Italy, which they now menaced with an immense army of fourscore thousand men.

The island of St. Lucia surrendered to Sir John Jervis, and Major General Dundas, who was directed by Sir Charles Grey upon this expedition with such troops and artillery as were thought necessary for the reduction of the island. In ranging the coasts to the different points of debarkation, the ships were obliged to hug the shore, and received many shots from the batteries with which the coast was lined; but fortunately not one drop of blood was spilt. The day after the grenadiers and light infantry had landed and taken possession of some out-
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posts and batteries, Sir John Jervis and General Dundas summoned Morne Fortunée to surrender : they at first returned an equivocal answer ; but upon observing a disposition being made for landing some battalions of seamen, they immediately submitted to the terms of capitulation.

The capture of the island of Guadaloupe was soon after effected by the gallant officer Sir Charles Grey with infinite address and resolution, though not without some loss of the brave soldiers and seamen who co-operated with them on shore. They had no sooner landed than they were ordered to storm the fort Fleur d'Épée, a very strong situation to which the enemy had retired in great force and number. The troops were commanded not to fire, but to execute every thing with the bayonet. The first division which commenced the assault was headed by his Royal Highness Prince Edward ; the post was carried by storm, and the greatest part of the garrison put to the sword. This difficult and adventurous

turous service was executed, according to the General's own words, "with such exactitude, superior ability, spirit and good conduct, by the officers that severally commanded those divisions, and every officer and soldier under them, as to do them more honour than he could find words to convey an adequate idea of, or to express the high sense he entertained of their extraordinary merit on the occasion." This success put our troops in possession of Grande Terre. The General without loss of time embarked the greatest part of his troops for Basseterre, in order to complete the conquest of the whole island. After the General had landed with his troops, and made every necessary disposition to attack the most formidable redoubts of the enemy, D'Arbaut, Grand Ance and Anet, the former were evacuated and set fire to, and the latter was taken by assault without the loss of a man. We also took in like manner their famous post of Palmiste; after which General Collot capitulated, surrendering Guadaloupe and all its

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depen-

dependencies, comprehending the islands of Marie Galante, Desiderata, the Saints, &c. upon the same terms which were allowed to Rochambeau at Martinico, and Ricard at St. Lucia, viz.—to march out with the honours of war and lay down their arms, to be sent to France, and not to serve against the British forces or their allies during the war. Thus ended the glorious expedition of these brave and able officers Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis. It is with heartfelt satisfaction that we read in the General's account, that “to the unanimity
 “and extraordinary exertions of the navy
 “and army on this service, under fatigues
 “and difficulties never exceeded, his Majesty and their country are indebted for
 “the rapid success which in so short a time
 “has extended the British empire.”

The system of our internal policy was still uniformly actuated by that fatal principle upon which every wish to correct abuses, every opinion against the policy or necessity of the war, every attempt to procure

cure a purer popular representation in Parliament, were to be punished as sedition, libel, or high treason ; an ill-fated policy, giving oftener a legal cloak to real criminality, than bringing condign punishment upon the guilty. Thus, because Mr. Walker of Manchester had uniformly and openly opposed the present system of measures as ruinous to the welfare of the country, was he indicted for conspiring with nine other persons to overturn the Constitution by force of arms, and to raise men for the purpose of assisting the French in case of an invasion. The most unusual and unwarrantable methods had been long pursued openly to traduce the character of this gentleman, as hostile to the Constitution of his country. He was tried and honourably acquitted ; and the only person who deposed any thing against the defendant was one Dunn, who was immediately after committed for perjury ; a serious and awful instance of the extreme mischief of encouraging spies and informers, who must be generally composed of the most abandoned

and profligate of mankind ! Upon the testimony of this same miscreant Mr. Paul of Manchester was imprisoned for nine weeks on a charge of high treason ; and Mr. Booth was condemned to a year's imprisonment for speaking seditious words, upon the evidence of this same perjured villain, although his evidence upon the trial at Manchester assizes had been directly contradicted by that of a fair, honest and unimpeached witness. Thus are fortune, character, reputation and life itself exposed to the sport, mercy and avarice of wretches detestable both to God and man ; the perjured bearers of false testimony against their neighbours !

CHAPTER V.

M A Y.

CONTENTS.

Attempts to connect the Exertions for Reform with those of the Enemy—Mr. Reeves sets the Example in the District of the Duchy of Lancaster, of swearing in every Man a Constable—Mr. Thelwall's House where he delivered his Lectures presented to the Jury, but not found to be a Nuisance—King's Message upon the Existence of a general Conspiracy against the Government—Messrs. Hardy and Adams arrested—Mr. Pitt's Motion for a Select Committee of 21—First Report from the Secret Committee—Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act—Opposition to the Bill—The Minister's Conduct towards the Objects of his Severity—What the intended Convention was really to be—How the Minister has treated the Roman Catholic Subjects of his Majesty—Mr. Fox's Motion for omitting the Long Oath at Elections—Mr. Sheridan's Motion to require no other Test from Catholics serving his Majesty, than what are required from Foreigners—Nature of the Test Law—Second Report of the Secret Committee—

tee—Lord Lansdowne's Motion respecting our Situation with America—Lord Dorchester's imprudent Answer to some Tribes of Canada—Clairfait defeated—Duke of York attacked, and repels the French—Clairfait attacked again, drives the Enemy into Courtray, but is himself obliged to retreat—The French cross the Sambre and attack Kaunitz—Are repulsed with the loss of 5000 Men—General Defeat of the Combined Armies—Fresh Attack upon the Combined Army by 100,000 French, who were repulsed with the Loss of 12,000 Men, after an Engagement of seventeen Hours—Beaulieu driven from Arlon—Ninety-nine Ships lost in one Month—Capture of Bastia.

LITTLE would it avail the Ministry to carry on a war for the preservation of our Constitution, unless they convinced their adherents that the Constitution was really in danger, and persuaded them that all the exertions against it within the kingdom were made in concert with the efforts of the enemy without. The meanest driveller in politics would not attempt to seduce or convince, but under the semblance or pretence of consistency. It was necessary then for the promoters of the present fatal system, to set up a real or pretended unity of action between

tween the armies on the Continent and the reforming societies within the kingdom. The ingenuity of statesmen, the influence of patronage, the omnipotence of opulence have been nearly exhausted in the fruitless experiment. Whilst there lasts a glowing ember of British freedom, it will enkindle in the breast of every patriot a vivid remembrance of this glorious struggle with the basest federates armed against their welfare, rights and liberties. Buoyed up with a passing breeze of success on the Continent, they seized the critical moment to accomplish their scheme by one decisive blow. Had it succeeded, it would have riveted for ever the tomb-stone upon the grave of British liberty.

In the formation of every concert, the correspondence, gradation and harmony of the different parts are the principal objects of the composer. If we attend minutely to this grand symphony, composed for the express purpose of fascinating a deluded audience into oblivion of their actual situation,

tion, we shall trace distinctly, and with precision, the working up of the piece from the overture to the grand finale; from the associating bellows-blower of the Treasury organ to the tremendous reports of the Secret Committees of both Houses of Parliament. So new and difficult was the composition, so ill adapted to the talents of English performers, so little congenial with the taste and feelings of a British audience, that the whole spring and summer seasons were found requisite to arrange, distribute, and practise the different parts, for perfecting the performers for the intended exhibition in the autumn, which we shall notice in the proper time and order.

Lord Hawkesbury, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, had appointed Mr. Reeves his Steward to the Duchy Court of Lancaster. His Stentorian powers of vociferating alarm had been already tried, approved of, and in part rewarded. Accordingly the first official act of his zeal manifested itself in an unusual expedient,
which

which could not fail of producing the desired effect. Presuming that the generality of a well-meaning and nervous multitude would judge of the malignity of a disorder by the multitude of advisers and drugs applied to the patient, he very wisely, upon this principle, issued forth from the Manor and Liberty of the Savoy a Manifesto, on the first of the month, "that on
 "the 8th the Court would meet again,
 "where such persons, being residents with-
 "in the Liberty, who were disposed to
 "take an active part for preserving the
 "peace and protecting their property, in
 "case of any sudden emergency, would be
 "invested with the authority of constables,
 "the better to enable them so to do." A truly efficacious remedy against sedition and treason, where every man has authority to take up his neighbour upon suspicion !

The next effort of Mr. Reeves's zeal was the special mission which he deputed against Mr. Thelwall. This gentleman, it seems,
 was

was in the weekly habit of giving political lectures at his house in Beaufort Buildings. Mr. Reeves's zeal would not permit the sacred limits of the Savoy to be polluted and defiled by such democratic enormities; fourteen or fifteen persons were accordingly brought forward, to give evidence before the Jury, to induce them to present his house as a nuisance. They however were more attentive to the rights and duties of Juries, than to the manœuvring schemes of their political steward, and declared, that, having heard evidence, they saw no cause for presenting the meeting at Mr. Thelwall's as a nuisance. The example however of swearing in an indefinite number of volunteer constables was followed by most parishes of the metropolis; thus ineptly affording sanction and opportunity to the evil-minded (if such existed) by putting the staff into their hands.

These measures were of a trifling nature, of slow process, and little formed to satiate the cravings of those who had convinced
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their Sovereign that sedition and treason were stalking abroad in his dominions, and had rested the *reality* of the danger at which the nation was alarmed, upon proof of the guilt of the delinquents who had conspired its destruction. Accordingly Mr. Dundas brought down to the House of Commons the following Message from his Majesty. These Royal Messages, like the King's Speeches to his Parliament, are constitutionally considered as the words of the Minister.

“ GEORGE R.

“ His Majesty having received information that the seditious practices which
 “ have been for some time carried on by certain Societies in London, in correspondence with Societies in other parts of the
 “ country, have lately been pursued with increased activity and boldness, and have been
 “ avowedly directed to the object of assembling a pretended general convention of
 “ the people, in contempt and defiance of
 “ the authority of Parliament, and on principles

“ ciples subversive of the existing laws and
 “ Constitution ; and directly tending to
 “ the introduction of that system of anar-
 “ chy and confusion, which has fatally pre-
 “ vailed in France ; has given directions for
 “ seizing the books and papers of the said
 “ Societies in London, which have been
 “ seized accordingly : and these books and
 “ papers appearing to contain matter of
 “ the greatest importance to the public in-
 “ terest, his Majesty has given orders for
 “ laying them before the House of Com-
 “ mons : and his Majesty recommends it
 “ to the House to consider the same, and to
 “ take such measures thereupon, as may
 “ appear to be necessary for effectually
 “ guarding against the further prosecution
 “ of these dangerous designs, and for pre-
 “ serving to his Majesty’s subjects the en-
 “ joyment of the blessings derived to them
 “ by the Constitution happily established in
 “ these kingdoms.

“ G. R.”

On the same day Mr. Hardy, the Secre-
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tary of the London Corresponding Society, and Mr. Adams, the Secretary of the Society for Constitutional Information, were taken into custody and examined before the Privy Council. This regal annunciation of guilt was followed up by the arrestation and examination before the Privy Council, of several members of these societies, who appeared more particularly zealous in forwarding the ends of their institution.

As the curtain was now undrawn, the scenic delusion was to be kept up, and all the pomp and solemnity that the managers could devise were to be thrown upon these early accusations and denunciations of guilt. The Chancellor of the Exchequer therefore, upon the production of the papers which had been seized, moved, “ that an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, to return him thanks for his gracious Message; “ to assure his Majesty that the House will “ immediately take into its serious consideration the subjects recommended to “ them by his Majesty; that they will “ adopt

“ adopt such steps as shall appear to them
 “ to be necessary, in a matter so highly im-
 “ portant to his Majesty’s dominions.” He
 then moved, that the papers should be sub-
 mitted to a Secret Committee of twenty-
 one. On this occasion Mr. Fox strenuous-
 ly insisted upon the illegality of the Secre-
 tary of State’s seizing papers without any
 charge of high treason. Mr. Dundas re-
 plied, that the papers were seized on war-
 rants granted for *treasonable* practices.

So eager was the Minister for forcing
 upon the House his deductions and infer-
 ences from the report of this secret and se-
 lect Committee, composed entirely of the
 immediate Servants of the Crown and
 their affrighted and alarmed profelytes*—
 such as Messrs. Burke, Wyndham, &c.—that
 in two days they produced their first report of

* The balloting for this Committee may possibly
 have been influenced by the notes which were said on
 this occasion to have been sent from the Treasury to
 their friends, entreating their attendance and enclosing
 a list of the Committee that was actually *selected*.

uncommon

uncommon length upon immense volumes of papers. The nation was all on the tiptoe of expectation, when the Minister undertook to disclose the grand revelation of these dark conspiracies: the whole of this first report and his speech upon it was nothing more than an orderly retail of the plans, operations and resolutions of the Public Societies, that had before been printed and published and circulated as widely as their slender finances would admit of: no unknown fact brought to light: no other design projected nor attempted than to procure a parliamentary reform. Yet such immediate and imminent danger did he infer from this report, that the only expedient for the safety of the State which he could devise, was the removal for a time of the great palladium of British liberty by suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act*. He concluded therefore by moving, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to empower his Majesty to secure and detain such persons as his Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against his Person and Government.

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Mr.

Mr. Fox on this occasion expressed his extreme astonishment, that the men who had formed the report, men of talents, character and information, should have thought it necessary to recommend so sudden, so violent, so alarming a remedy, and that upon facts notorious for years. It was strange indeed, to inform that House in detail of every thing which had been passing unnoticed and with impunity day after day before the eyes of the Ministry, and now to call upon them for their peremptory judgment upon the probable effects of such events, and of the necessity of putting an end to them by the most violent of means. Several other Gentlemen of the same side opposed with great strength of argument this delivery over of the personal liberty, the property and the lives of individuals to the power and will of the Executive Government, especially when advised upon such flimsy grounds as had been produced to the House.

The debates upon this extraordinary measure

sure of Government were attended with more heat than any during the session; the particulars we need not retail. The Bill which passed into a Law gave to the Minister the extraordinary and alarming power to hold any persons they pleased in prison, without bringing them to trial or admitting them to bail. How they have used this power in various instances, it will be my duty to notice as they occur.

Never perhaps was the people of England more deluded than by this manœuvre. With the aid of Mr. Burke and others, the Minister had already engaged the dread, hatred and execration of a great majority against the French revolution. Could he therefore effectually direct these feelings against that party within the kingdom which he meant to crush, the summit of his ambition would be attained. Preparatory and incidental arguments, proofs and accusations he left to his underlings; his towering spirit spurned all mesne process, and he at once anticipated the actual commission of the

whole guilt which his fertile imagination had affixed to the objects of his intended severity. In a word, he represented them as a swarm of French or Frenchified Democrats introducing the Gallic tragedy upon the British Theatre. He charged them with having actually summoned, like their Gallic neighbours, a National Convention to wrest from both Houses of Parliament the whole legislative, and usurp from the Crown the executive powers of Government. After a charge of this nature, what further rigour remained to be pursued, than to engraft upon it the most violent legislative measures that the Constitution will admit of, in order to criminate those in the eyes of the public, who were thus declared by the Legislature to be the guilty cause of their drawing forth their utmost severity and harshness? The desperate and truly alarming fact of a Convention summoned to assume the legislative and executive powers of Government put into the mouth of the Sovereign, reported true by two secret and *very select* Committees of both Houses of Parliament, immediately causing
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the removal of our constitutional security for our property and persons, and many individuals after repeated examinations before the Privy Council committed for high treason, were circumstances when combined together sufficient to blind a nation, and almost to supersede the necessity of sending the accused to trial. But, thanks to Heaven! there is still left unto us the sacred ægis of a Jury, to develop truth, and protect oppressed innocence. Surely the spirit of the British Constitution never intended to send men to take their trial under such an overpowering mass of prejudice.

Few and rare, but inestimable are the men, who in the height of national effervescence and alarm meet with steadiness the rising events, and foresee their immediate and remote consequences through the foul and turbid medium of prejudice, fear and confusion. Mr. Pitt, and his affrighted and deluded host of alarmists, were in the moment warned by their opponents in the House, that the only views and ultimate

wishes of these societies were a reform in the representation of the people ; that the people was entitled to demand it, and had an inalienable right at all times to assert it. That such had formerly been the sentiments of Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Richmond ; and no more was asked for, nor claimed at present, than in the year 1782. That conventions and delegations for this purpose were then practised, and were at all times warranted by the laws and Constitution of Great Britain. It was then said, as it has been since proved, and is now generally believed, that this convention, which the Minister so wilfully and so grossly misrepresented to the House as assuming the legislative and executive powers of government, was neither more nor less than a meeting of a certain, and indeed very confined number of delegates from each society, which had associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, to consider and consult jointly on the readiest and most effectual means of procuring peaceably and legally
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the grand common object of all their wishes, a Reform in the popular Representation of the House of Commons. This deadly blow at the system of venality and corruption, to which these societies attributed all the evils and disasters of the country, was in fact the tremendous bugbear, against which the Minister appears to have been directing all the engines both of peace and war. The time may not be very remote, when the now secreted and scattered leaves of our modern Sybils shall unite, in order to shew that the real objects of this waste of blood and treasure were not the re-establishment of young Capet on the throne of his ancestors ; not the abolition of anarchy or tyranny in France ; not the support and protection of our allies ; not self-defence against foreign invasion ; but to discredit and criminate, and thus to prevent a Reform in the popular Representation in the House of Commons.

To what other principle can be traced
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that invariable and unrelenting opposition given by the Minister to every measure proposed by those, who were known to avow their wishes for this reform, whether it immediately concerned that object or not? Thus did he negative Mr. Fox's motion for the omission of the long oath at elections, which tended to open the elective franchise to the Roman Catholic subjects of his Majesty in Great Britain; and Mr. Sheridan's motion for removing the effects of the Test Law, by which all Roman Catholics and others are prohibited to serve their King and Country, either in the army or navy of Great Britain. When we call to our mind, that the British Empire has now been involved two years in a most extensive, ruinous and disastrous war; that amongst the great variety of motives blazoned forth by Ministers for entering into and continuing this war, one was the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in France; that there are some millions of his Majesty's subjects throughout the British Empire, who profess

feels the Roman Catholic religion ; and that the return from the War-Office in Ireland, of persons recruited and passed into his Majesty's service from that kingdom, since the commencement of hostilities, amounts to above 82,000 men ; it will not be irrelevant to the subject of this history to lay before the public a minute and undisguised narrative of the treatment which the body of English Roman Catholics have this year experienced from the Ministry of this country.

It is an uncontroverted fact, that the English Roman Catholics have on all occasions, on which they have been permitted, uniformly testified their allegiance to their Sovereign, and their attachment to the Constitution of their country. Happily, and for the credit of all parties, the ancient rancour and bigoted prejudice against persons differing from ourselves in religious opinions, had been changed into general benevolence, and as free an allowance to the consciences of others, as we claim

claim for our own, to enjoy an uninterrupted intercourse with the Creator in the concerns of eternal salvation. The Catholics were recognized subjects, and permitted to practise their religious duties to their God, without forfeiting any longer their property and their lives to the State. These partial indulgences were received by the body with gratitude, and considered as the sure forerunners of their general civil incorporation with their fellow-citizens, by being admitted to participate equally with them of the active and passive benefits of Parliamentary Representation, and the liberty of serving their country by land or sea. Their wishes for these enviable enjoyments redoubled upon them in proportion as they beheld an anxiety in Government to hold out the advantages and superior excellencies of the Constitution to the admiration and affection of the public. More cordial support and co-operation are certainly to be expected from a participation and enjoyment, than from a total seclusion from the advantages of the

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displayed

displayed objects of admiration and affection. Sympathy and desire forwarded their wishes; and they already looked up with certainty and confidence to this much longed for incorporation with their countrymen at large. They were confirmed in their warm expectancies, by the removal of the oppressive and disgraceful payment of a double land tax, which passed without one dissentient voice, upon the motion of the Solicitor General to omit that clause in the Land tax Bill, by which it was annually renewed; although, when made the year before by Mr. Fox, the Minister caused the proposition to be rejected.

It was a circumstance that could not escape the knowledge of the Roman Catholics of this country, that their brethren in Ireland had, in consequence of a very gracious recommendation from the Throne, been lately admitted to the elective franchise and the military service of that kingdom: and notwithstanding these advantages were only commensurate with the
juris-

jurisdiction of the Parliament of Ireland, yet that many score thousands of Irish Roman Catholics were deluded into a belief, that the British service was as free and open to them as to others; and that they were now actually serving his Majesty both by sea and land against the injunctions, and under all the prohibitions, pains and penalties of the Test Law: nor could it be forgotten that Lord Fitz-Gibbon and Mr. Secretary Hobart had pledged themselves to the two Houses of the Irish Parliament, that the army and navy of Great Britain would be opened to the free services of all British subjects, by an Act of the British Legislature, within two months from the time of their making this communication. This open promise had been made nearly two years, and no step taken upon it. However several Catholic Gentlemen were, even in England, admitted into the militia and new raised corps: and different members of the body contributed largely, in proportion to their means, to the new levies.

Upon

Upon reading the report of the Bill for the further prevention of delays in the election of Members to serve in Parliament, Mr. Fox observed, that his only objection to the Bill was, that it did not go far enough. He wished that the whole of what was called the long oath should be omitted at all future elections. Having shewn the absurdity of administering this oath on such occasions, he moved that the Bill should be re-committed for the purpose of striking it out. The motion passed, and the Bill was ordered to be re-committed. The tender of this long oath was the bar to the Roman Catholic's elective franchise : for although there be no law directly to disqualify a Roman Catholic from voting, nor is there any necessity of administering this oath to every elector ; yet it is always in the power of the person who wishes to prevent a Roman Catholic from voting, to propose to him this oath, which, if he persist in the profession of his religion, he cannot subscribe. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer was present in the House when
Mr.

Mr. Fox's motion was made and passed, it was generally understood that it was agreed to on the part of Government. This conviction spread also abroad, as we shall see in the sequel.

Mr. Sheridan had long given notice of his intention to make a motion for leave to bring in a Bill for enabling British subjects to serve his Majesty, without being liable to any other test than such as was required by the foreigners who were lately enabled to serve his Majesty. He had been several times particularly requested by the Minister to put off his motion; at first on account of official avocations, and latterly under the express intimation of his own intention to bring forward some proposition upon the subject. In the intermediate interval of the confidence and expectancy of the Roman Catholic body, the Minister's conduct with respect to individuals was as singular as it was unaccountable. Some commissions to Roman Catholics were signed, and others refused. It is notorious, though

though not very readily accounted for, that a Catholic Gentleman in Surry, of respectability and fortune, and great influence in the neighbourhood, and who had rendered himself conspicuously forward in promoting the voluntary subscriptions at the Surry Meeting, had been nominated Lieutenant-Colonel of a new corps, which he had principally contributed to raise: the Minister, however, did not think proper to permit his commission to be signed. In this he certainly obeyed the law: But, said Mr. Sheridan in the House, *is it fit that the law should so remain?*

In this moment of suspense and expectation, the Roman Catholic Peers, confiding like the rest of their brethren in the sincerity and promises of the Minister, presented a respectful memorial to Lord Grenville, in which they very zealously offered their services to Government, and expressed their grateful sense of the countenance which his Majesty's Ministers had given to the two questions now pending before the House,

House, for opening the elective franchise to their Catholic brethren, and for enabling them to carry arms in defence of their King and Country. But inasmuch as they would not personally be benefited by the elective franchise so kindly intended for the Roman Catholic body, they entreated his Lordship to advise them in the readiest way to be admitted to their hereditary seats in the House of Lords; or otherwise they would stand in the peculiar situation of not being at all represented in the British Parliament. The memorial was very graciously received, and every attention to it promised, which official etiquette wraps up in a volume of unmeaning terms of complacency.

No sooner after this did opportunity call the sincerity of the Minister's professions into action, than he threw out Mr. Fox's motion for omitting the long oath; and sent word to Mr. Sheridan, that having abandoned his idea of bringing forward any proposition from himself relative to the Test
Law,

Law, he was at liberty to make his original motion upon the first open day. Accordingly when he did make the motion, he ushered it in with this candid and too true observation : That although it were no party question, yet there could be no possible objection to the motion, than that of its coming from his side of the House. As it was one of those questions, which will not bear candid and fair discussion, Mr. Dundas, without offering a single argument against Mr. Sheridan's speech, got rid of the motion by proposing, which was in fact carrying, the previous question. Thus ended for this year the flattering dreams of the Roman Catholics' emancipation.

It is fitting that the nation should know, which they would not by any thing said in the House on this occasion, how the law of the land operates the exclusion of every other, than a Church of England man from the army and navy of Great Britain. The Test Law, originally passed in the 25th of Car. II. and afterwards explained by the

1st Geo. st. 2. c. 13. enacts that every person having any employ, civil or military, or receiving pay, wages, salary, &c. from the Crown, expressly including common soldiers and sailors are enjoined, besides the taking of certain oaths, which a Roman Catholic cannot take, to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the usage of the Church of England within a given time; in default of which they become *ipso facto* disabled and incapable of holding and enjoying any such office or employment. A person therefore so disabled and incapacitated by law, cannot legally perform the duties of an office or command, as is self-evident. This incapacity affects those under and about the recusant or non-conforming officers; but the parties themselves, by continuing to serve after such neglect or default, are upon conviction to be expelled the service, and incur a civil death, by being rendered incapable of bringing any action at law or suit in equity: of being a guardian, executor, or administrator: of taking a legacy or any benefit under

der a deed of gift : of being in any office in Great Britain : of voting at any election for members to serve in Parliament : and shall moreover forfeit the sum of 500l. to any informer. From these disabilities and penalties did Ministers thus refuse their concurrence to release his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects : and under their full rigour and effects, do they permit and promote thousands of Irish and other loyal subjects to be ensnared and swindled into the service. Yet could these same Ministers bring forward a Bill to enable his Majesty to employ in his service any number of Roman Catholic foreigners, though the Secretary of State expressly avowed in the House, when he moved the previous question, that the loyalty of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects was unimpeachable.

The second report of the Secret Committee in the Commons, and all the proceedings in the Lords upon his Majesty's Message, and the subsequent steps taken thereupon, were of the same stamp with

the first of which I have already spoken. The Duke of Grafton, whom the enormity of the present measures had forced out of his political retirement, severely noticed the extreme inattention of Ministers to that House. When from the communication of his Majesty to them the country was declared in imminent danger, the Peers were not summoned for forty-eight hours after, to investigate or deliberate upon the danger.

The Marquis of Lansdowne, whose firm and keen judgment was not to be terrified or misled by phantoms into any misconception of the real state of the country, either internal or external, called the attention of the House to our relative situation with America : and after having with his usual ability and vast political information exposed the mischiefs and dangers to which our arrogance to neutral States, and their armed alliance in consequence thereof, had brought us, he referred to a most inconsiderate and imprudent reply mentioned in
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the New York newspapers to have been given by Lord Dorchester to a deputation from several nations of Lower Canada. He read it to the House, and then moved that an Address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would give directions to lay before the House copies of such instructions as have been given or sent to Lord Dorchester, relative to all differences subsisting between this country and the United States of America, as well as such communications as he may have made of conferences with the Indian tribes relative thereto. This motion was opposed by Lord Grenville, and of course it was negatived. The authenticity of the reply was denied by Ministers; but as many other of their assertions have proved false, so this fact was afterwards found to be as stated by the Noble Marquis.

The last month closed with the unfortunate defeat of General Clairfait at Mœucron, on the very day on which Landrecies surrendered; and seemed to turn the whole

success of the campaign. Upon this the Duke of York was ordered by the Emperor to march at midnight with all the troops under his command from Cateau to St. Amand, where they arrived extremely fatigued. According to Clairfait's account to his Royal Highness of this disaster, the attack was made by the French with infinite impetuosity, and the battle lasted from eight o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon: and though his troops behaved with much courage and resolution, yet no sooner was the order for retreat given, than from the intricacy of the country they fell into a confusion, from which it was impossible ever to rally them. The French soon after this attacked the Duke of York at Tournay with a body of 30,000 men, but by the intrepidity and conduct of our troops they were repulsed with great loss.

So determined were the French to clear Flanders, that within three days after their unsuccessful attack upon his Royal Highness, they again attacked General Clairfait's
corps

corps in great force, who the night before had crossed the Heule. This action was extremely violent and bloody, and lasted from one o'clock till eleven at night, when Clairfait succeeded in driving them back into the town of Courtray: yet according to his Royal Highness's account, "not being able to take possession of the place, he retreated again, first across the Heule, and then behind the river Mandel: but being still very closely pursued by the enemy, he found himself under the necessity of continuing his march to Thielt, where he took up a position to cover Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend. His loss, he was sorry to say, had been very considerable."

So resolute and determined did the French appear to render themselves masters of all the Austrian Netherlands, that no check nor losses could damp their ardour. They forced the passage of the Sambre, and attacked General Kaunitz in a very strong position, which he had taken to cover Mons, be-

tween Roucroi and Binche. He had the good fortune to repulse them, with the loss of 5000 men, and obliged them to retreat again across the Sambre. His Royal Highness still retained his position at Tournay, and the Emperor marched thither to his assistance. Here they planned their general attack upon the French lines, in order by a joint co-operation with the troops under General Clairfait to compel the enemy to evacuate Flanders. The attack was to be made in three columns, one under the command of the Emperor and Prince Cobourg, another under Prince Charles and General Clairfait, and the third under the Duke of York, General Otto, and Colonel Maek. The French were too well prepared: they poured immense numbers of troops out of Lille and Courtray: they succeeded in dividing our troops, and in a word gained a complete victory: the loss both of men and cannon was immense on the part of the Allies. The Duke of York was obliged to fly almost unattended, and repeatedly escaped only by the swiftness of his horse:

never

never was a rout and confusion more terrible : blame was of course thrown from one to another : all however seem to allow that the ardour of the British troops had carried them beyond ordinary prudence or safety : they were actually surrounded, and would have been all taken prisoners, had they not with undaunted resolution cut through an infinitely superior number of their enemy, with melancholy loss both of officers and men. The Austrian accounts say, that “ the Hanoverians were the first
 “ to retreat ; they created the general con-
 “ fusion ; for their cavalry not only de-
 “ stroyed our foot, but threw the whole
 “ army into such disorder, that they be-
 “ came a helpless prey to the pursuing
 “ enemy. Their conduct proved more fa-
 “ tal than the hostility of the French.”

This terrible disaster spread alarm through the country : the allied armies, as they could rally and collect themselves, resumed their former positions near Tournay, Turcoigne, Lannoy, Roubaix, and Mourveaux.

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The Emperor here received a powerful lesson upon the policy of continuing the war against the French Republicans, whose downfall and extinction had been so often demonstrated to him upon paper by Colonel Maek and others. The first attention of his Imperial Majesty upon his return to Tournay, was not to order a march directly to Paris, but to spread a healing plaster over the dispirited and wounded hearts of his subjects. He therefore immediately published a soothing Bulletin, to contradict several exaggerated representations of the disaster, alledging truly enough, that *it is of consequence immediately to counteract the dangerous effects of alarms that spread with such rapidity.*

Four days after this calamitous defeat, the French again attacked the combined armies with an enormous force of upwards of 100,000 men. The attack began at five o'clock in the morning, but scarcely became serious till nine, when the whole force of the enemy fell upon the right wing of the combined

combined army, in order if possible to force the passage of the Scheldt, and so to invest Tournay. They firmly maintained their post till nine o'clock at night, when with the reinforcements which were sent to them they obliged the enemy to retreat, with the immense loss of 12,000 men, which his Royal Highness observes to be by no means improbable, as they were exposed for twelve hours successively to an incessant fire of cannon and musquetry. The spirit and conduct of General Fox, who commanded the British brigade on this occasion, were particularly conspicuous. The calamitous failure of our grand attack upon the French lines, and the subsequent misfortunes were somewhat allayed by this repulse of so superior a force, and by the accounts from General Beaulieu in Bouillon, where he had defeated the enemy, killed 1,200, and taken 300 prisoners, with six pieces of cannon. General Kaunitz had also obtained a fresh victory over the enemy on the banks of the Sambre, where he had killed 2000, and taken 3000 prisoners, with more than fifty pieces of cannon,

cannon. Great and important as these advantages might appear to the allies, the French were not checked by them ; their numbers, their ardour, their perseverance were unsurmountable. At this very time they marched an army of 40,000 men into the Duchy of Luxembourg, and obliged Beaulieu immediately after his success at Bouillon to evacuate Arlon and fall back upon Marche, in order to cover Namur. From these different events we may usefully learn to reflect, of what slight avail are the personal bravery, resolution and conduct of our men and officers towards forwarding the extermination of a nation fighting upon one common principle for the defence and maintenance of their rights and liberties.

Upon striking the balance of the account for the current month, so little credit could be allowed on one hand for any of the advantages which had cost us so dear ; and on the other, such an immensity of loss, present and future, was incurred by our failure, that despair alone could be the genuine
effect

effect of cool reflection. The fatal list of captured British vessels for this month of May appeared at Lloyd's to be, after deducting re-captures, precisely ninety-nine, which exceed three for each day. The gloomy prospect was however to be relieved by some more cheering scene : and we are at length gratified by the second act of the conquest of Corsica. The Court account of this new and favourite little piece is curious.

It gives in detail the surrender and capitulation of Bastia, and the cession of the whole kingdom of Corsica except the town of Calvi which still held out. It sets forth in the most glowing colours the magnanimity and perseverance of the conquerors of that mighty kingdom, the unanimity and cordiality of the landsmen and mariners *,

* Other accounts directly contradict this, and affirm that the dissensions between the General and the Admiral were such, as almost to have defeated the whole expedition. Certain it is that General Dundas threw up in disgust, and returned to England.

recapitulates

recapitulates minutely the generous terms granted by their doughty conqueror to the garrison of Bastia, in consideration of the gallant defence they had made against this powerful host of assailants ; and closes with a lively piece of imagery representing a night scene, and setting forth in a glow of colouring, under a double light of blaze and moonshine, the innumerable difficulties which they had so happily surmounted.

CHAPTER VI.

JUNE.

CONTENTS.

Glorious Naval Victory of the 1st of June—Seven French Men of War taken, one sunk in the Engagement, and one after striking—The French by this Engagement secured the Arrival of their American Fleet, of 160 Vessels—Failure of our Arms on Land—The Emperor and Colonel Mack leave the Army—The French defeated before Charleroi by the Hereditary Prince of Orange—Clairfait again defeated—The Hanoverians discontented with him—Mutual Accusations of each other—Fall of Ipres—General Consternation thereupon—The Emperor's Entreaties to the Belgians to rise en Masse—Defeat of Cobourg in his Attempt to raise the Siege of Charleroi which had surrendered on the preceding Day—Lord Moira sent with his Army to join the Duke of York—Ostend evacuated—Decree of the Convention to give no Quarter to the British and Hanoverian Troops—Mr. Fox and the Duke of Bedford make Motions for Peace—City Militia Bill—Vote of Thanks to Lord Hood—King visits Portsmouth.

AT length have we fortunately found an opportunity of exerting the vigour and
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strength of Great Britain to some desirable purpose ; and although it has cost the lives of many valiant seamen, the ever memorable victory of the first of June will revive in the breasts of Englishmen the honest pride of triumph in their superiority upon the ocean, and recall their attention to the improvement of their natural strength. It is always natural, perhaps seldom justifiable to look up to the Commander of the Channel Fleet for the consequences either of our success or discomfiture. Undoubtedly when once at sea with discretionary powers, the plenitude of responsibility rests with the Admiral : but the public is seldom initiated into the dark mysteries of the Cabinet : it has often sent out the Channel fleet with positive injunctions to the Commander not to risk a general engagement. Upon this ground alone is it we believe the French fleet during the preceding year to have appeared so frequently in the Channel with impunity. On the present occasion fortunately the gallant Admiral had such orders, that neither checked his ardour nor cramped his disposition

position to try the issue fairly with his enemy.

With judicious and spirited manœuvring he at last brought the enemy to a general action. They had 26, he only 25 sail of the line : we made the attack, and *they sustained it*, says our Admiral, *with their customary resolution*. In less than an hour after the action had begun in the centre, the French Admiral, engaged by the Queen Charlotte (Lord Howe's ship), crowded off and was followed by most of the ships of his van that were in condition to carry sail after him, leaving with us about ten or twelve of his crippled or totally dismasted ships, exclusive of one that was sunk in the engagement. Our own fleet was so much disabled and separated, as not to be able to secure all the crippled ships of the enemy which could not follow their Admiral. Seven struck their colours, though one of them, the Vengeur of 74 guns, sunk immediately upon being taken possession of. This was reckoned to be the severest engagement, for

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the time it lasted, within the experience of the oldest officer of the fleet ; and, happily for this country, exhibited to the world at large the most unequivocal testimony of the superiority of the intrepidity, skill and conduct of British seamen.

We have every reason to exult in this signal victory of our fleet ; but it affords a melancholy demonstration of our Cabinet's neglect in procuring information, and of their supineness in acting, when even by accident they have acquired intelligence. The great object for which the French risked the engagement of the first of June, was to secure the safe arrival of their American fleet, consisting of 160 sail, and valued at 5,000,000*l*. Sterling: above 120 of these vessels were laden with provisions and military stores, of which the Republic stood then in the last want: the remaining forty were laden with the produce of their West India Islands. True it is that Admiral Montague was sent out in quest of this fleet, but with a force so palpably deficient as to be the
humble

humble and mortified spectator of the whole fleet and convoy's triumphant entry into Port L'Orient.

Great was the nation's triumph upon her native element, but her disasters and failures at land proved a severe but wholesome lesson against attempting the extermination of a free and independent nation. The Emperor had in his mournful account of the last victory before Tournay sufficiently bespoken his sentiments and feelings upon the rueful situation of affairs at this crisis. Emphatically did he complain of his being
 “ deeply afflicted with so many misfortunes
 “ and disasters: amidst the cries of victory,
 “ he heard the groans of the wounded.
 “ The enemy had lost at least 6000 * men,
 “ but the combined army could not have
 “ lost less than 2000 soldiers killed. The
 “ day after 2000 combatants have lost their
 “ lives, cannot to a feeling Monarch be al-
 “ together a day of triumph.” He soon

* The Duke of York's account carries the number of slain to 12,000.

after withdrew himself from the army. His confidential military adviser, the promising Colonel Maek resigned, and attended his Imperial master on his return to Vienna. He loudly complained of his having been thwarted and crossed in all his designs. They both left the army under the experimental conviction of the absolute impracticability of the well understood though undefined objects of the war.

Notwithstanding their repeated repulses by General Kaunitz, the French again crossed the Sambre, and threatened to surround his whole column; they had already twice attempted the siege of Charleroi, and now actually opened the trenches before it. The Hereditary Prince of Orange attacked and defeated them with the loss of 7000 men and 32 pieces of cannon, which obliged them to retreat again beyond the Sambre, where they took up a position near Jodelies in order to cover the siege of Charleroi. This advantage was more than outbalanced by the defeat of General Clairfayt in West Flanders,

Flanders, who had in his column about 7000 Hanoverians, and five regiments of British. Every movement of this brave and experienced, though unfortunate officer seemed to serve only to throw away men, and sow distrust and diffidence amongst the troops. The Hanoverians refused absolutely to obey him, and insisted upon being commanded by one of their own Generals, either Walmoden or Hammerstein. This latter General was justly respected and beloved by the whole army, particularly since his spirited fortie at the head of the small garrison of Menin, where, in order to rescue a corps of emigrants from execution by their countrymen, he generously and valiantly cut his way through an army of several thousands of the enemy who had surrounded that town. General Clairfayt on the other hand complained of a want of bravery and conduct in the Hanoverians. Certain however it is, that not only the Hanoverians, but also the British troops complained that General Clairfayt had led them on, under the promise of co-operation, to a point in which they

were totally exposed to the enemy, and would have been inevitably cut off, had they not made a very hasty retreat.

Never did a garrison make a more resolute and vigorous defence, than that of Ipres. This town is the key to West Flanders; it was besieged by an army of 30,000 men, supported by a covering army of 24,000. The importance of this post was well known to the combined armies: General Clairfayt suffered three defeats in five days in endeavouring to raise the siege, and Prince Cobourg was also checked in his attempt to throw succours into the place from the main body of the army. The brave General de Salis held out till all his ammunition was expended and several of his guns dismounted; he was then obliged to surrender, and the brave survivors of this long and bloody siege were made prisoners of war. The consternation into which the fall of Ipres threw the whole Austrian Netherlands is scarcely to be described. Every body at Ostend, that had the means, quitted

ted it : the departure of Prince Ernest was the general signal of alarm and flight. All the valuables of every description were shipped off, and the remainder of the garrison had orders to abandon it. The like consternation began at Bruxelles.

It is well known that the Emperor had left no expedient untried to save his territories in the Netherlands. He at last resorted to the persuasive means of personal presence and confidence. In his last proclamation of the 23d of this month to the Belgians, when he exhorted them to rise *en masse*, which he published from Bruxelles, he spoke to them with the tenderness of a Father, rather than with the authority of a Sovereign : he had indeed found this latter useless. " Religion, Constitution, Property, the Sovereign, says he, who wears you all in his heart, who came among you without guards, who trusted himself to your love, who esteems you." The people of Belgium were as deaf to these entreaties as they had

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been

been to his former exhortations to raise levies for the armies.

No sooner had General Clairfayt been forced from his position at Deynse, and fallen back upon Ghent, than General Walmoden was under the necessity of quitting Bruges and joining General Clairfayt's army. His Royal Highness having intelligence of these movements, by which all communication with Ostend was cut off, and learning that the French had detached a corps to attack Oudenarde, found it necessary to quit his situation before Tournay, and march to Renaix for the defence of the Scheldt. So completely had the French cut off all communication between the armies of Prince Cobourg and General Beau lieu, that no intelligence whatever could be procured of the fate of Charleroi. A general attack therefore was determined upon by Prince Cobourg, and was executed with great resolution: it proved at first successful, but ended in the total repulse of the Prince's army: and here it was that he first learnt

learnt from a deserter, that Charleroi had surrendered on the preceding day. Upon this Prince Cobourg made a very orderly and judicious retreat, first as far as Marbais, and from thence to Nivelles, to cover the country as far as possible, and to protect Namur.

The fate of the Netherlands was now fixed ; and our Cabinet, with their usual prevoyance and dispatch, sent out Lord Moira with that part of his army which had survived the expedition to the coast of France, (except the cavalry) in order to reinforce the Duke of York. Immediately upon their landing at Ostend, they marched up the country to form a junction with his Royal Highness at Antwerp : Colonel Vyse waited in the mean time at Ostend, to see all the artillery, stores and baggage embarked for Antwerp, before it was ultimately evacuated.

In the course of this month his Royal
Highness

Highness took an opportunity of communicating to his army the inhuman decree passed by the French Convention for giving no quarter to the British and Hanoverian troops. " He anticipated the horror and " indignation with which, he knew, his " brave troops would receive this information. He reminded them, however, that " mercy to the vanquished was the brightest " gem in the character of a soldier, and exhorted them not to permit their resentment to lead them to any precipitate act of cruelty on their parts, which might " fully the reputation they had already acquired in arms." His Royal Highness very fairly attributed the passing of this decree to the overbearing influence of the blood-thirsty Roberespierre, and as handsomely as truly anticipated the effect of it upon the French army. " The British " and Hanoverian armies will not believe " that the French Nation, even under their " present infatuation, can so far forget their " characters as soldiers, as to pay any attention to a decree as injurious to themselves

“felves as it is disgraceful to the persons
“who passed it.” This horrid decree never
was put in execution, till it was repealed
after Roberſpierre’s death.

Little will it ſurprize the reader, who has
conſidered the alarming turn of events dur-
ing this month on the Continent, that freſh
and irrefiſtible motives for ſtopping the fa-
tal progreſs of our diſaſters, ſhould animate
the true friend to his country to raiſe even
a hopeleſs reſiſtance to ſtay its rage. The
Duke of Bedford in the Lords, and Mr.
Fox in the Commons, made motions for
peace, which they introduced by very elo-
quent and appoſite ſpeeches, which though
they worked not a total diſſipation of alarm,
nor an abſolute defecation of principle on
the Treafury Benches, proved nevertheleſs
to their country, where and by whom its
real and true intereſts were attended to, and
demonſtrated the ſcandalous falſity of the
venal boaiſtings, that indigence and deſpair
could alone diſapprove of the war, or op-
poſe any of the meaſures of the preſent Ad-
miniſtration.

ministration. Whatever liberty may be claimed and allowed of to differ from others in opinion upon political matters, the strength of mind and brilliancy of talent in these two promoters of peace, effectually repel the imputation of folly from those who think with them that the war is ruinous; their avowed loyalty and attachment to the Constitution of their country, clears them of any seditious or treasonable suspicions; and the unequalled property of the Noble Duke in this country, annihilates the very suggestion of introducing agrarian equality into the nation. When we behold the efforts of a weak and wretched junto to tarnish the patriotism of this Nobleman, an involuntary though congenial indignation arises against a former junto, who caused that blood to flow from the scaffold which still animates the posterity of the immortal Russell.

The greatest misfortune of a weak mind is its ever concomitant obstinacy. The first *faux pas* of delusion might be often remediable, were it not for the many follies and

extravagancies with which it is followed up and supported. The infatuation was certainly great that first plunged the nation into this war, but the subsequent means of palliating and supporting that fatal measure are of incalculable folly and mischief. The war is converted into the ready pretext for every unpalatable or dangerous application, that suits the views of ambition and power. Because therefore the citizens of London had been persuaded of the justice and necessity of the war, therefore were they also instructed and directed to give up to the Executive Power their long chartered right of defending themselves by a force out of their own body, subject to none but their own laws. And when Mr. Sheridan opposed the new City Militia Bill in the House of Commons, he not only urged this ground to deter them from their pusillanimity, but he maintained that the citizens of London did not thoroughly understand the full extent of the Bill then before the House. Sir James Sanderfon, Mr. Alderman Curtis, Sir Watkin Lewes, and Mr. Alderman Anderson

derfon contended that their constituents had full information upon the fubject, and on their behalf did thefe four City Members pledge to the Houfe the moft unqualified affent and approbation of their constituents. Mr. Sheridan obferved, that if the City Representatives continued to fupport this Bill after their constituents fhould have acquired full information upon it, they would not fpeedily prefent another petition to that Houfe from the City of London. Mr. Secretary Dundas, in a very lofty tone, difdained the idea of the citizens not knowing their own intereft, or ftanding in need of that Honourable Member's warning to assert their rights.

A vote of thanks of both Houfes of Parliament had moft defervedly paffed to Lord Howe, for the fingular fervices rendered to his country on the firft of June. It is generally underftood that the talents and bravery of this able feaman were called forth by the perfonal interference of his Majefty, and not from that influence which had re-

moved this deserving veteran from the head of the Admiralty Board, to make room for a successor, that would from family and other considerations, be more submissive in modelling the appointments of the navy to the trim of the present system. Lord Hood was of the family compact, and it was judged that the acquisition of a new crown was as deserving of the thanks of Parliament, as the crippling of the navy of a republican enemy. Accordingly Mr. Secretary Dundas moved, " That the Thanks of the House be given to Lord Hood for the important service he has rendered to this country, by his able and gallant conduct in his expedition to Corfica." Opposition was made to the motion both in the Commons and the Lords *. The grounds of

P R O T E S T

Against the Vote of Thanks to Lord Hood.

Dissentient,

1. Because it has not been the practice of this House to vote thanks to officers commanding his Majesty's forces by sea or land, except on occasions where they have

of the opposition cannot be more fairly set forth than in the protest entered against it in the Upper House.

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have eminently advanced the honour, and promoted the interests of their country, by the most important and acknowledged services.

2. Because, by voting the thanks of this House, except in such instances, we diminish the value of the most honourable reward we have it in our power to confer, and lessen one of the best incitements to future service.

3. Because the reduction of Bastia does not in itself appear to us to be such a service as calls upon this House for any extraordinary approbation or applause.

4. Because whatever the merit of that service may be, the other Admirals of the fleet, and the commanding officers of his Majesty's land forces must have had their share in it; and to refuse thanking them, as had been usual on similar occasions, appears to us to justify our opinion that the vote of thanks to Lord Hood originated from some motive of a private and personal nature, which it is improper for this House to countenance.

5. Because even Ministers themselves do not seem, in the first instance, to have considered that service as entitled

As the most flattering compliment that could be paid to the gallant Admiral Lord Howe, his Majesty, with a great part of his family, made an excursion to Portsmouth, to view the conquering and the captured fleet.

entitled to such a mark of approbation; for though accounts had been received of the reduction of Bastia previous to those of the victory obtained by the fleet under the command of Earl Howe, no intention was announced of moving a vote of thanks to Lord Hood, till this House had paid the just tribute of gratitude and honour for that most important and splendid victory.

BEDFORD.

DERBY.

ALBEMARLE.

THANET.

LAUDERDALE.

CHAPTER VII.

 JULY.

CONTENTS.

Parliament prorogued—King's Speech thereupon—Imperial Loan opened with Mr. Pitt's consent at Messrs. Boyd and Co. for 3,000,000—Breach of Treaties by the King of Prussia—The Emperor withdraws his Stores and Troops into Germany—The King of Prussia pleads the necessity of employing his Force in Poland—Duke of Portland, Mr. Windham, &c. go into Administration—Judges Opinions how the Persons imprisoned should be tried—Mr. Jay, the American Envoy Extraordinary—Failure of Lord Macartney's Embassy—New Cabinet Arrangements—Proposals for Peace with Spain—Bruges, Tournay, and Mons receive the French cordially—Cobourg's Defeat, and the loss of 7000 Men, retreats through Brusselles—Namur, Mechlin, Louvain, and all Brabant evacuated—Lord Moira's Expedition to the Continent of Flanders—He resigns—His Farewell to his Army—The Duke of York retires to Breda—The Prince of Orange's Address to his Army—Defeat of the Combined Armies on the Rhine—Sluys holds out—Lille evacuated.

THE

THE Parliament had continued their session to this unusual lateness in the season more to keep up the appearance of national confidence in the Legislature than from an expectation or intention of bringing forward any new measure for the welfare of the People. The business of the session had been long concluded, and the Minister seemed now only to await the settlement of his new Cabinet arrangements before he prorogued the Parliament. An adjournment was moved to the 11th, when the Duke of Norfolk in the Lords, and Mr. Sheridan in the Commons, complained of Ministers postponing the business of Parliament to what they called the urgency of State affairs. They alledged that most alarming changes had taken place in the turn of affairs on the Continent; and that the perfidy of the King of Prussia in abandoning his engagements, and the criminality of our Ministers in paying his extravagant subsidy without his having performed the condition upon which it had been

granted, called aloud for the serious and efficient intervention of Parliament. As to any real effect upon the country, the notice for making a motion at a future day, or a debate upon it in a full House, was now become one and the same thing; to such a certainty was the division of both Houses brought. When his Majesty prorogued the Parliament he called emphatically upon the energy and zeal of his loving subjects, notwithstanding the recent successes of the enemy in the Netherlands, to persevere in this *just* and *necessary* war; but hinted not at the defection of his faithful ally the King of Prussia, or the intentions which were now known of the Emperor's seceding also from the confederacy.

Mr. Fox had frequently foretold in the House of Commons, that the Prussian subsidy would produce no other effect than to detach the Court of Vienna from the confederacy unless retained in it by a subsidy from this country; thus should we soon become the principals and the only pay-masters

masters of this fatal war. The King of Prussia, whose views from the beginning of the war were to turn it either to the profit of himself, or detriment of his imperial rival, was as little delicate in demanding this enormous subsidy as he was scrupulous in observing the terms of its engagement. The Emperor had more grace ; he at first proposed to borrow a sum of money of our Government, which being refused, he then entreated leave to raise 3,000,000*l.* sterling in England, upon mortgage of the Netherlands : this was consented to, and a loan was opened for this sum for the Emperor at the house of Messrs. Boyd and Co. merchants, at about 7*l.* 10*s.* interest per cent. per annum. Mr. Pitt gave all the countenance he could to the negociation both by word and writing, expressing the earnest wishes that Government had for its success, for the *accommodation of his Imperial Majesty, with whom his Majesty is engaged in the closest union and concert.*

Although the treaties with their Imperial

and Prussian Majesties have been communicated to the public, yet it is a known diplomatic truth that the secret articles of all treaties are generally the most material and important. With reference to these two contracting powers, there are some strong facts, which though not hitherto developed and accounted for to the nation, are truly alarming, and justify the most serious enquiry into their cause. It is notorious that both these powers are expressly engaged to forward, in concert with Great Britain, the war against France; the King of Prussia had already publicly violated every term of his two last treaties with us, and the Emperor had begun to remove his magazines and stores, and to withdraw his armies from the Netherlands into Germany, which, if not done with the full consent and approbation of Great Britain, was a palpable breach of the treaty between his Imperial Majesty and our King, signed on the 30th of August 1793. We then find Lord Hertford, and after that Lord Cornwallis, treating, supplicating, and remonstrating with
his

his Prussian Majesty, and evidently with no visible effect. We then see Lord Spencer deputed upon a special mission to Vienna; notwithstanding which we have hitherto been without any co-operation from his Imperial Majesty since the evacuation of the Netherlands. Late transactions in Poland render it necessary to be known, whether his Prussian Majesty did really avow to Lord Cornwallis, that the interests he had to look to in that kingdom were incompatible with, and must supersede his engagements with our Court. If such a plea have been admitted by our Cabinet, and the base violator of his most solemn undertakings have been rewarded by 1,200,000*l.* for his perfidy, the better to enable him to oppress or exterminate that much injured people, then can it not be denied that Great Britain has superadded to the rest of her disgraces and calamities the blackest of all treachery, by joining the conspiracy of despots against the invaded liberties of Poland.

The introduction of the Duke of Port-
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land, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham, into Administration, was a circumstance that astonished all those who had believed their opposition to Mr. Pitt's administration grounded upon principle.

When a party has largely shared the confidence of a nation for any length of time, it is a fortunate circumstance that calls from them an unequivocal test of the sincerity of their professions. The support of the war could not render this heterogeneous coalition necessary; it had been constantly voted for by these affrighted proselytes; their being admitted into Administration could not multiply the number of voters for the measure to which they were already devoted. It became therefore the definitive touchstone of their sincerity, whether they had hitherto opposed and reprobated Mr. Pitt's administration from a real horror of the principles upon which it arose and was supported, or from a desire to monopolize the whole patronage and influence of Government. According to their future conduct

duct will the nation adjudge, and trust them with their confidence. Though a generous people may place to the score of nervous debility the first effects of surprise or alarm, yet will they not carry the extension of their confidence in the present men and measures by one iota further, than the more effectual support of the war, the avowed cause of their change.

Some more internal operations were thought necessary to keep up the appearance at least of unity of action at home and abroad. The wily Minister had prepared against the risks of his last desperate adventure, by extending his partnership to such as had hitherto in the country been looked up to as real *good* men. The trial will be severe though just ; all the returns have not as yet come in, nor has the grand rest been yet made ; many foreign as well as inland acceptances are still outstanding. Something was to be done with the many objects of suspicion, fear, or hatred, who had been thrown into gaol since the suspension
of

of the *Habeas Corpus Act*, upon charges of Sedition or Treason. The Privy Council referred the questions to the twelve Judges, when and how it would be proper, legal, and convenient to try them. They reported that the most convenient and legal method of proceeding, would be for the persons charged with those offences then in custody in London and Middlesex, to be tried at the next sessions of Oyer and Terminer at the Old Bailey, to be holden in September ; and those who were in custody in the country to be tried at the country assizes.

All possible pains were taken to convince the public, that the American States were highly satisfied with the conduct of Great Britain ; the high flown panegyrics and peculiar attentions bestowed upon Mr. Jay, their Minister Extraordinary to our Court, kept up the conviction. Certain, however, it is, that they have hitherto been kept from war by the prudence of their President, more from the

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dread

dread of bringing upon themselves the common calamities of war, than from the conviction of their not having received more than full provocation to it from us. The like attempts were made to fascinate the people into a persuasion, that the enormous expences of Lord Macartney's embassy to China had procured the greatest commercial and other advantages to this country: whilst the total and disgraceful failure in the objects of that embassy is a matter of melancholy notoriety.

In order to let in the new partners, and thus to increase their credit by the alteration of their firm, Mr. Secretary Dundas relinquished one of his many appointments, and the Duke of Portland with a blue ribbon (filched from the shoulders of the well-deserving Howe) was appointed Secretary of State for the home department. Some indeed assert, that an excess of constancy to old friends and to old habits, has hitherto prevented this state pluralist from an actual resignation, and that the
noble

noble Duke has only acted as a third, and subordinate Secretary of State.* Such an office once before existed in the American War, and was abolished by the means of the very party for whom it was now

* Since it has become the fashion to recommend the reperusal of Mr. Burke's Works, it is curious and instructive to look back at what he said of this very office, of a third Secretary of State, on a similar appointment, under similar circumstances.—Speech on his *Œconomy Bill*, February 11th, 1780. “The business of
 “ the new office which I shall propose to you to suppress, is by no means too much to be returned to
 “ either of the Secretaries which remain. If *this dust*
 “ *in the balance* should be thought too heavy, it may be
 “ divided between them both; North America (whether free or reduced), to the Northern Secretary; the
 “ West-Indies to the Southern. It is not necessary
 “ that I should say more upon the *inutility* of this office.
 “ It is *burning day-light*. But before I have done, I
 “ shall just remark, that the history of this office is too
 “ recent to suffer us to forget, that it was made *for the*
 “ *mere convenience of the arrangements of political intrigue,*
 “ *and not for the service of the State*; that it was made in
 “ order to give a colour to an exorbitant increase of
 “ the Civil List, and in the same act to bring a new
 “ accession to the *loaded compost heap of corrupt influence.*”

revived.

revived : one slight, though not unequivocal symptom of the sincerity of their former opposition to measures which they now adopt. Lord Fitzwilliam was made President of the Council. Lord Spencer, Privy Seal. The zealous Mr. Windham became Secretary at War ; and the Earl of Mansfield, a Supernumerary Member of the Cabinet. At his advanced period of life, when habits and principles are supposed to have operated a second nature, when the work of a conversion is almost miraculous, it became necessary for the safety of the State, and the preservation of the Constitution of Great Britain, to affix a large and new salary to such transcendent merit, though no specific services were required for the appointment. Under this new firm, and more extensive establishment, we must proceed to examine the nature and progress of the adventure.

This open coalition of talents and power, might in the eyes of the public appear to give vigour, and ensure success
to

to the future exertions of our Cabinet against both their foreign and domestic enemies, the Democrats. What real increase of strength this additional reinforcement operated, cannot be precisely ascertained: but if we judge from the effects hitherto produced by the combined action of this coalition, a diminution rather than an increase will be found to have taken place in their impulsive and repulsive powers.

The successes of the French Republicans in Spain became alarming in their consequences to all the powers confederated with that monarchy against France. Peace had begun to appear to the Court of Madrid, as the only and last means of checking the rising discontents of the people, which had hitherto prevented their Cabinet from calling forth the energy of the nation against their invaders; and if continued, threatened the overthrow of their existing Government. A negotiation
was

was now said to have been actually opened with the executive powers of France, who demanded the four following preliminaries.

1. The Acknowledgement of the French Republic.
2. That the late French Agent at Madrid should be the accredited Minister Plenipotentiary from France.
3. The restoration of all places taken during the war.
4. An absolute renunciation of all connections with the French branches of the House of Bourbon.

Every day and almost every hour of this month opened fresh proofs of the increasing success, strength, and influence of the French Republic, and might have convinced us, had we not been too obstinately blind, of the inefficacy and desperate rashness of opposing her in the establishment of a permanent and accredited government. Bruges invited the French into their town, under an unqualified surrender. Even Tournay, which had retained more regard and respect for the Combined Powers, than any other town of the Netherlands,

lands, received the French troops with the most jovial marks of joy: liquor was brought to the gates through which they made their entry. Health and prosperity to the nation was drank, and shouted in loud accord by the army and citizens. Mons, after a fresh defeat of Prince Cobourg, was entered at one gate by the French, whilst the Austrians retired unmolested out of the opposite gate. Prince Cobourg had, after the evacuation of Mons, attempted to make a stand in the Forest of Soignies, where he had raised several batteries, and rendered the posture very formidable. They were assailed and carried by the bayonet. The Prince, after losing above 7000 men, and finding it impossible to repel the enemy, ordered a retreat, which was executed in good order through Bruffels and its environs in the night. He had previously directed the Magistrates of that town to enjoin the inhabitants under pain of death to confine themselves to their houses, fasten their doors, and block up their windows. Thus
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in solemn, though dejected pomp, marched through Bruxelles the collected remnants of this army, that had during the last and former campaigns suffered such various turns of fortune. This singular order of the General spoke more forcibly than a volume of manifestoes, the feelings and the sentiments of the Brabanters at the retreat of the Imperial armies, and their separation from the House of Austria. The Citizen Volunteers maintained, notwithstanding this order, a strict guard to prevent disorder or plunder till the arrival of the French, who entered at one gate, as the rear of the Austrians were going out at the opposite.

In like manner General Beaulieu evacuated the city and citadel of Namur, upon the fortifications of which, immense sums had this very year been expended. It appears that the French had now abandoned, if they ever practised, the plundering and pillaging system which their enemies have so loudly complained of. Every
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where was property respected, and discipline kept up. The Imperialists retired towards Maestricht and Liege. The armies of Lord Moira and that of the Duke of York for some time kept up a line of communication to cover Antwerp. Mechlin, Louvain, in a word, the whole of the Austrian Netherlands was evacuated and quietly possessed by the French.

The army under Lord Moira had undergone incredible hardships ever since their debarking at Ostend : they marched without tents or baggage, and suffered extremely from the heat and dryness of the season. Their commander had endeared to himself the affections of his men in a most extraordinary manner : they almost adored him : they ever beheld him the foremost in difficulties and dangers : he slept in the open air, like the meanest foldier in the ranks ; and anticipated, in his example, every order he issued to the lines. Although every man who is acquainted with the spirit and ability of this gallant officer, have the firmest

est reliance upon his execution of orders with minuteness and energy; yet, as throughout the whole progress of this expedition of his army to the continent of Flanders, and in his Lordship's sudden return to England, there appears some degree of mistrust or failure, or at least of mystery, I shall endeavour to state, as clearly as circumstances will admit, a real and unclouded exposition of the facts.

In a written account of Lord Moira's views and motives for his conduct in this expedition, communicated by his Lordship to the General and Field Officers of that corps that went out under him, he tells them, that his orders, upon embarking, were confined to the sole object of defending Ostend: and that he had explicitly assured the Minister, that *any orders for his serving in Flanders must occasion his immediate resignation*. He then enters into a minute detail of the reasons of his using his own discretion in marching his troops to form a junction with the army of his Royal High-

ness near Antwerp. In forming this design he shewed as much prudence, as he manifested energy in executing it. As his Lordship has not favoured us with his reasons for giving that assurance to the Minister before his departure, any attempt to account for them will rest upon no better ground than of probable conjecture. Although a species of junction were formed with the army of his Royal Highness, still whilst Lord Moira remained with his own army on the continent, there was no joint co-operation of the two bodies. Their acting separately was evidently to avoid the confusion which would have been the necessary consequence of the officers in Lord Moira's army claiming the precedence, which their late advancement upon the continent of Europe would have entitled them to above senior officers in the British army; these promotions upon the staff, for the projected expedition to St. Malo, were made in exclusive contemplation of this army acting in a country where there were to be no other British troops. The
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case was now altered, but not provided for. It does not appear improbable, that his Lordship still retained the full conviction, which he once unequivocally professed, of the mischievous folly of forcing a government upon France, or forwarding the views of ambitious, intriguing, unwilling and perfidious allies, by co-operating with them in the invasion of France on the northern frontiers; and that he therefore peremptorily refused personally to co-operate in this rash and desperate system of impracticability.

Upon his Lordship's resigning his command to General Abercromby, within three weeks after his landing, he published an address * to his Army, which bespeaks the feelings

* Lord Moira's Address to his Army, when he departed from them at Antwerp, on Tuesday, July 22, 1794.

"Particular circumstances calling Lord Moira immediately to England, he is to be relieved at this post by Lieutenant General Abercomby.

feelings and sentiments which I have ventured to presume were retained by him, as to the policy and justice of our general conduct in this fatal war.

Immediately upon Lord Moira's resignation of his command, the French pressed

“ Lord Moira cannot surrender his command, without entreating the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the corps which accompanied him from Ostend, to accept his warmest and most grateful thanks for the kind and cheerful acquiescence he has experienced from them, in the severe fatigues to which he was obliged to subject them.

“ He has the assurance, that he is still to have their support in the service to which they were originally destined ! And that hope lessens his reluctance at ceasing, for the present, to share the honourable dangers of service !

“ He trusts they will believe, that no light consideration would have obliged him to quit them ; as he persuades himself they are sensible of his having endeavoured to repay the generous attachment they have shewn him, by the most lively interest for their welfare.

“ For the present, he bids them farewell, with the most fervent prayers for their honour and prosperity.”

with such impetuous force upon the British lines, that his Royal Highness was under the necessity of retreating to the strong position of Breda. He happily effected it without loss. The Prince of Orange about this time made an address to the United States, to rally the zeal of all those true lovers of their country, that wished to preserve its independence against the Gallic invaders, and destroyers of all order and government. He pledged to them his own existence, and summoned all the powers and vigor of the States to withstand the enemy. The danger he allowed to be imminent, when an irresistible enemy had so effectually turned the late defensive system into the most alarming operations of offence. A garrison was thrown into Maestricht, and the town was declared to be in a state of siege. By orders from the Court of Vienna, the Imperial army was making good its retreat into Germany. Their march was for a time interrupted by the melancholy reports of the defeat of the combined armies on the Rhine. Scarcely

were ever heard such accounts of blood, slaughter, terror, flight and confusion : six days successive fighting, and sometimes uninterruptedly, without eating for nineteen out of the twenty-four hours. A combined army of 100,000 men was driven by the violent impetuosity and daily renovated vigour of fresh troops across the Rhine, and the victorious French threatened even Manheim and Mentz. The first impression of these bloody victories terrified the inhabitants of the surrounding country from their homes, and the consequent confusion was neither to be conceived nor described. The French issued proclamations for insuring the security of their persons and the protection of their property, which brought back the greater part of these affrighted fugitives.

On the borders of Holland, the town of Sluys was closely besieged, and the brave Governor rejected the summons to surrender with a spirit and dignity now rarely to be found in the armies of Holland, though worthy of the primitive founders of that republic.

republic. The important fort of Lillo, which commands the navigation of the Scheldt, was evacuated and abandoned by the garrison. For the honour of our countrymen, we hope the French Commissioner Richard mistook the Dutch for British troops. But, to our shame, the ultimate issue of events has generally proved the reports to the National Convention more consonant with the reality of facts, than the representation of them from the Treasury Bench of the British Senate. "I announce to you, says this Commissioner from the northern army, the evacuation of Fort Lillo. The English, in their retreat, broke down the dykes, and inundated more than six leagues of the country. They carry with them the hatred and execration of the inhabitants, which they had merited by their pillage and baseness."

CHAPTER VIII.

AUGUST.

CONTENTS.

Fall of Roberspierre—Its Effects upon the Republic—Prince Cobourg's singular Manifesto to the Circles—Exhortation of the Stadtholder to the States—Removal of Cobourg—Surrender of Sluys—The British retire to Bois-le-Duc—The Emperor's Address to the anterior Circles—Capture of Treves by the French—Their System of Moderation to the vanquished—Death and Character of Count Merci D'Argenteau—The Blue Ribband given to the Duke of Portland—Ten New Peers created,

THE present advanced stage of the campaign, the close of a session unexampled for the violence of the measures proposed, and the unqualified submission of the majority by which they were adopted ; the session

cession of the great leaders of the Whig Party, and their coalition with those whom they had opposed for the last ten years, formed a wonderful coincidence of circumstances to arrest our attention to the relative situation of Great Britain and the French Republic. With the full invigoration of their respective powers, we now began to feel the effects of a fair trial of skill, strength and energy. The impetuous and rapid advances of the republican armies had brought the British forces to the humiliating necessity of introducing into their tactics the hitherto unknown process of perpetual retrogradation. I am as unwilling to presume that the Jean de Brie of the British Cabinet had actually dispatched any of his missionaries to Paris to demolish the executive government of France, as I am to believe that any of the originally proposed corps of assassins had been dispatched to England upon a similar errand. A full experiment however was now made of the effects of an attempt to overthrow the existing government of the French Republic, by
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the destruction of their leaders. The zeal of the Earl of Mansfield could scarcely at this time have given a larger commission to the Captain-general of his destroying Legion, than the removal of the blood-thirsty leader and foul of the Convention, Roberespierre, with his party. This must have been the prelude or first act of the insurrection or rebellion, which, it was maintained in the British House of Peers, ought to be encouraged and insured by any price. In the downfall of this Jacobin Ruler of the French Government, did its enemies foresee the sure dissolution of the whole system. Europe however saw Roberespierre, with nineteen of his friends and associates, and sixty-eight municipal officers in his interest, executed in one day, for affecting a power which the Nation had not granted—and the energy of the Republic invigorated, not palsied by their fall. Can there be a stronger demonstration that the French Government had now acquired a solid basis, that the spirit of that Government had generally pervaded every rank of people, and that whatever

differences of party might exist in France, the whole nation was unanimous, even to enthusiasm, in resisting the revival of Monarchy, and opposing the invasions of foreign powers. The truth of these observations is emphatically expressed in Barra's report to the Convention, of the quiet and pacific state of Paris after the executions, which, considering the former popularity and influence of Roberespierre, was truly surprising : " I assure the Convention, " that all is calm, and Paris is in perfect " tranquillity. The people saw the deepness " of the abyss dug under French liberty; " the people applauded the punishment of " the hypocritical conspirators, who had " usurped their confidence; for to the people THE REPUBLIC is every thing, individuals are nothing, and the Convention is their Watch-word."

It is astonishing that so violent a change as might have been expected from the death of Roberespierre, and the extinction of his party, should not have produced the slightest

slightest effect upon the conduct of any of the combined powers, even in the first uncertain moments of their joy and expectancy from the great event: no aid, support, nor encouragement given to the Royalists to take the advantage of the critical moment: no offensive effort attempted to impress the Republican armies, with a hope or prospect of delivering themselves from the infamy of their late, and the dangers of relapsing into future tyranny: but all was retreat, cession, and despondency from every quarter of the Confederacy. The execution of Robespierre took place on the 28th of the preceding month.

Immediately after the report of this internal commotion in France, Prince Cobourg published a Manifesto from Foron le Comte, to the people of the Germanic Circles, to exhort them to rise in arms, to apply all their church plate to the payment of his army, and to supply them with provisions and stores. He tells them,
that

that " their valorous armies had just quitted
 " the fertile plains, in which they had sus-
 " tained the most severe combats from
 " three bloody campaigns, for the pre-
 " servation of their property, the repose
 " of their lives, the security of their fields,
 " the maintenance of their religion, the
 " happiness of their children, the riches of
 " their flourishing provinces, and to save
 " those provinces from ruin and complete
 " annihilation." He further assures them,
 not in a very consolatory style, that the
 inexhaustible resources of the French Na-
 tion in a state of furor, its innumerable
 cohorts which are led to slaughter by their
 tyrants, and, above all, the disaffection of
 the Imperial subjects of the Netherlands to
 the House of Austria, had forced his army
 to retreat to their frontiers. " It is there
 " that they are now posted—weakened,
 " but not vanquished: fatigued by an
 " unequal conquest, but not humbled by
 " discouragement, nor subdued by despair."
 The conclusion of this exhortation is of a
 new and truly curious structure. Having
 assured

assured them that his army was *an advanced wall for the defence of Germanic liberty*, he teaches them in what this liberty is to consist, should *they*, like the inhabitants of the Netherlands, resist the call of their Sovereign to rise in a mass, and victual and maintain his armies; then he denounces to them the assurance of pillage and plunder from his troops, whatever chances they might have of escaping it from the French. “ We
 “ shall find ourselves obliged to cross the
 “ Rhine to leave you a prey to your ene-
 “ mies, and to withdraw from you without
 “ ceremony whatever the enemy might
 “ find amongst you for their subsistence.”
 This truly valuable and new species of liberty was indeed promised to the Circles: but they neither rose in arms, nor maintained their menacing defenders.

A similar exhortation, with similar effect, was attempted by the Stadtholder to the States of Holland, to incorporate and arm against the French; whilst they employed their money in recruiting in other countries.

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This Prince's reasons to their High Mightinesses were also grounded in the irresistible impetuosity and energy of their enemy; and emphatically bespoke the futility and danger of continuing the War without opposing equal vigour and resolution. "We have," says he, "to do with an enemy who employ means utterly unknown to us or our ancestors, and who count for nothing the loss of their colonies, commerce, agriculture, and, in short, of human happiness; providing, that whilst forcing into action the whole resources of their country, they can reduce other nations to the same direful predicament. Such an enemy cannot be opposed with scanty contributions. The force that must be opposed to them, requires the greatest efforts." This exhortatory address was re-echoed by different Acts of the States General in a similar tone. It is singular to observe in that from the States of Overijssel, with what admirable dexterity they arrange the grounds and foundations upon which they build their certain hopes

of preservation and security: "The experience of former deliverances, the resources which still remain in us, the courage and cordiality of the allies, the wisdom of His High Mightiness the Stadtholder, the bravery of his Sons and your troops, and, above all, the succour of the God of the Low Countries, &c." Time has not yet absolutely disclosed to which of these particular grounds the preservation of Holland is to be attributed.

These addresses or manifestoes had the happy effect of convincing our Cabinet of the cordial sincerity and zeal of the parties making the professions. They therefore industriously spread abroad the report, that the Earl of Spencer had completely succeeded in his mission to the Emperor; that his Imperial Majesty had consented to carry on the War, upon being subsidised by the Court of St. James's: and it was also reported, that to this they had annexed a previous condition, for his Imperial Majesty to remove Prince Cobourg from the chief command of the Army, which was now seriously

seriously spoken of. It had long been the fashion of the British Cabinet to concentrate every species of umbrage, displeasure or offence into a charge of Jacobinism. And upon this occasion they went so far as to encourage the reports, that two persons high in the confidence of the Prince of Cobourg had been discovered in the pay of the French Committee of Public Safety. Clairfait was spoken of as the successor to Cobourg, and Beaulieu and Maek were to act under him.

In the midst of all these negociations, the grand rallying point was not determined upon; and the retrograde movements of the Combined Armies seem to have had no other regulating principle, than the actual advances of the French troops. The garrison of Sluys being no longer able to hold out, and no reinforcements being sent to relieve it, surrendered upon terms of capitulation. The British and Dutch armies retreated from Breda, where the French be-

gan to molest them, and fell back upon Bois le Duc: they encamped within three miles of that town, upon the very spot which had been so fatal to the British army in 1746; whence, from the numbers carried off by sickness, it had ever since retained the name of the *British Grave*.

So impressed was his Imperial Majesty with the present posture of affairs, that by his Minister Count Schlick he presented to the Assembly of the Circle of the Upper Rhine a very strong memorial, in which he reiterates his call upon the anterior Circles to rise in a mass, and supply the Imperial armies sent for their defence. He now openly avowed, *that the enterprise was full of danger, and that the resources of the House of Austria were limited*. After enumerating the multifarious services and merits of the Imperial armies, and the sacrifices made by his Imperial Majesty to forward the grand object of crushing or exterminating the French Republicans, he adds, "Another
" sacrifice

“ sacrifice of no less importance and of
 “ greater prejudice to his Majesty’s heredi-
 “ tary States, is, the Imperial Court has not
 “ applied to the Court of Great Britain, its
 “ faithful Ally, to oblige the 62,000 Prus-
 “ sians subsidised by the maritime powers to
 “ march into the Low Countries. Accord-
 “ ing to the express terms of the treaty,
 “ these troops were at the disposal of those
 “ powers, and to act in support of the com-
 “ mon cause. They would have been em-
 “ ployed to the greatest advantage in the
 “ Low Countries, and, by co-operating with
 “ the allied armies, might have averted the
 “ the calamities which have taken place.”

If the Court of Vienna, beyond any ques-
 tion the first power of Europe, could assume
 to itself so much responsibility for not press-
 ing the observance of a treaty to which she
 was no contracting party, what share of
 it must fall upon those Ministers of the con-
 tracting power itself, who ought, and would
 not enforce the condition, but rewarded the
 matchless effrontery of the breach by suc-

cessive instalments to the amount of one million two hundred thousand pounds * ?

In the full view and contemplation of the consequences of this abandoned perfidy, his Imperial Majesty condescends to make avowals, that in the mouth of an Englishman would be deemed scarcely short of libel or sedition. "These grievous and irreparable sacrifices, which have not been seconded with energy and alacrity, can only protract for a short period the last melancholy blow, which the empire has too much reason to apprehend from the conquest of the provinces on the banks of the Rhine, and on the other side of that river." Why should an Englishman, under the existing pressure of disasters, hesitate to acknowledge the futility of this desperate contest, when the greatest potentate of the civilized world,

* How differently did the Emperor think of the King of Prussia's conduct from Mr. Pitt, who asserted in the House of Commons, that his Prussian Majesty had properly co-operated with his subsidised troops up to September, when he thought proper to withhold the subsidiary payments !

scruples

scruples not in the eyes of Europe to own the necessity of withdrawing his forces for the defence of his own dominions, *when he had before his eyes the melancholy truth, that with the most upright and sympathetic intentions it is impossible to protect his friends and neighbours.*

The French soon began to verify the alarming predictions and fears of the Emperor ; they took a very critical advantage of the movements of the Imperial and Prussian Generals, marched in three columns, and with little resistance took possession of Treves. This position enabled them at once to keep a check upon Luxembourg, and to menace Coblenz, where there was no adequate force to oppose them, and from whence the Austrians were removing all their stores and magazines. A system of toleration, freedom and protection of property was now fully adopted by the French, as they extended their conquests. They had no sooner entered Treves than they established a municipality ; they

broke in upon no property whatsoever, and left the different corporations and all civil and religious institutions as they found them.

The failure of every step concerted by the Court of Vienna, drove his Imperial Majesty to the last resort of employing the services of the Count de Mercy Argenteau, who possessed the entire confidence of his Sovereign: he was dispatched upon a very special mission to our Court; but before he opened it, he died at the Hotel in London where he arrived. This singular character has been variously spoken of by every party. He had been Ambassador near thirty years from the Court of Vienna to that of Versailles, and kept up a powerful influence over the late unfortunate Queen. His policy was to prevent her from ever assuming the sentiments of a Queen of France; and he succeeded in re-vetting her, perhaps unfortunately, to the exclusive interests of the House of Austria. In all the mysterious negotiations and transactions of the last three years, the Count de

Merci Argenteau had evidently a great, if not the very greatest share in advising. From his long connections with the Court of Versailles, no man could be supposed to know more intimately and deeply the whole profligacy, policy, and intricacy of that Court. Whatever may have been the real motives of this refined politician, it is generally believed, that by his advice the Cabinet of Vienna was induced to engage in the War against France: and the party of the first French emigrants upbraid him for having recommended to the Emperor his original plan of Conquest, to which they attribute all the miseries of the War.

The latest actions of this Minister were, his undertaking, upon his own authority, without consulting his Court, to stop Prince Cobourg in his retreat to Germany, by ordering him in the Emperor's name not to repass the Rhine with his army as he intended, but to stop on the Meuse; from whence that Prince issued his last Address to the Germanic Circles. This exhortative
piece

piece of eloquence was the production of Monsieur Bellin, who was Secretary to Mirabeau till the day of his death; and it was published under the sanction and approbation of the Count de Merci Argenteau. The Count was always looked upon as a determined and zealous philosopher; and was said to have given fully into so much of the revolutionary system of France, as went to abolish all systems and establishments of religion. It is asserted, not without strong grounds, that the part which this Minister took in the misunderstandings between the Emperor Joseph and his Flemish and Brabantine subjects, was to bring about the abolition of all the religious institutions in those countries. In proof of his approbation of this destructive system, are alledged his large purchases of church property in France, and particularly of the Abbey of St. Valori in Piccardy.

The more disastrous was the prospect of our affairs on the Continent, the more intensely did our Cabinet at home stretch
every

every engine of influence and patronage to gain credit or protection for their hazardous and wild adventures. The gallant Earl of Howe had been promised the vacant Blue Ribband, as a reward of his meritorious services on the 1st of June. But the proselytism of the head of the Whig party to an Administration that he had ever openly opposed, was to be crowned with whatever could flatter the vanity of their new convert. The acceptance of the office of Third Secretary of State, abolished by Mr. Burke's Economy Bill, revived for the Duke of Portland without sanction of Parliament, was of more weight in the Ministerial balance than the demolition of half a French Fleet: and the Cerulean Ribband now graces the loaded shoulders of the new State Atlas.

From the never varying majority of voices in both Houses of Parliament during the late Session, it might have seemed superfluous in the Minister to wish for an increase to his numbers. He however lamenting

ing the scantiness of his means to reward such an heroic blaze of patriotism and virtue as had never before shone upon this nation, providently advised his Sovereign to increase the Aristocracy by half a score of his most select neophytes. In the general annunciation of danger to the State, the fury of the enemy was ever represented to be directed more immediately against the Throne. An additional number of Satellites was therefore recommended to the Sovereign. By every promotion of a Commoner to the Peerage, a new battlement was raised upon the upper fortrefs, and the vacancy caused by the removal immediately supplied by the most zealous emulator of his preferred predecessor. Thus providently against new dangers were double remedies ensured.

It was not only in the Senate that prerogative and patronage were thus prostituted to the purposes of party proselytism ; but, if we may credit reports from the army, the field of battle was strongly infected with the same baneful

baneful influence. " The stoppage of pro-
 " motion is matter of much discontent here,
 " while we observe, with emotions little
 " short of disgust, boys of two or three
 " years service advanced to be Lieutenant-
 " Colonels. In fact, if this promotion of
 " rank continues, the army will soon be
 " unfit to serve in ; the heads of it composed
 " by boys, and the subalterns of men with-
 " out property ; as no one that has money
 " will purchase a Cornetcy or Lieutenancy
 " in an old regiment, when he can much
 " sooner and easier get rank by independ-
 " ent companies, &c."

CHAPTER IX.

SEPTEMBER.

CONTENTS.

Re-capture of Valenciennes, Le Quesnoy, Condé, and Landrecies—French System of Moderation—Fresh Alliance with the Emperor—Clairfait advances with a large Force, but is obliged to retreat for Want of Provisions—Retreat of the Duke of York—Liege taken by the French—Latour and Clairfait defeated—Clairfait retreats towards Aix la Chapelle, General Kray to Maestricht—Calvi taken—The Kingdom of Corsica conquered—The Crown accepted by his Majesty—Sir Gilbert Elliott, Viceroy—Mr. Windham goes over to Holland—A Cordon of 30,000 men is formed along our Coast—Invention and Use of the Telegraph—Trial, Conviction and Execution of Watt at Edinburgh—Conviction of Downie, recommended to Mercy, and respited—Opening of the Special Commission—The Assassination Plot, a Fabrication of Upton—Discontents and Riots about Crimps and Kidnappers.

THE fall of the sanguinary Roberspierre produced no other effect within the Republic

public than the change of a system of blood and terror, into that of moderation and equity. It was asserted in the Convention, that Robespierre inhumanly exposed the armies, whenever he could, to the most wanton slaughter, under the hopes of their meeting with some check or disaster, which would enable him to work the downfall of his rival colleagues. By this change of principle in the government, the Executive power of France acquired a sudden invigoration and energy, which exceeded expectation, and almost belief. Robespierre's orders were still unrevoked in the armies of the North, for attempting to storm the captured towns of Valenciennes, Condé, Le Quesnoy, and Landrecies: he had allowed for the sure sacrifice of 6000 men in each attempt. This change in their system of government naturally produced a temporary inactivity in the remoter parts and dependencies of the Republic: but it was of short duration. And now, by moderate, not inefficient, measures, the army of the North made themselves masters of each of these towns, and

also of Nieuport, but with the loss of little blood to the Republic.

The Convention had very lately passed a decree, that each of these four garrisons, that should not surrender within twenty-four hours after they had been summoned, should be put to the sword. The decree was founded in that spirit which was let out with the blood of the monster Robespierre. The Convention left the execution of it to the Generals, who, by their lenity, sufficiently announced to the world the joyful adoption of a system of moderation by the French republicans.

The garrison of Valenciennes was the only one of the four which did not surrender within the time of the summons: and the Governor only surrendered in consequence of positive orders from his Commander in Chief. As the Austrian army had now quitted and abandoned the Netherlands, it was justly concluded, that any further resistance, without succours or supplies, would

would be a wanton waste of blood. Scarcely had the express delivered his dispatches, and the surrender been made accordingly, than another estafette arrived with orders for continuing the defence of the town*. This latter order was given in consequence of an intention or plan of fresh co-operation, on behalf of the Austrians, with the armies of Great Britain and the United States: this was supposed to be the result of Lord Spencer's negociation at Vienna. Soon after this, a large body of Austrians under General Clairfait moved in consequence of this revived federacy towards Holland: but finding no preparation or provision made for his troops, he was under the immediate necessity of retracing his footsteps, and resuming his former position. From this time we can trace no further symptoms of co-operation of the

* Some pretend that the letter which induced the Governor to surrender was a forgery; but so exactly was the Imperial hand-writing counterfeited, that when produced the Emperor himself could scarcely disown it.

Austrian army with our troops. If his Imperial Majesty have been, by British gold, brought back into this fatal crusade, his services, though great, in the furtherance of the good cause, have been impenetrable to the closest inspection even of the most interested spectators. Perhaps, indeed, their Imperial and Prussian Majesties have practised upon their Allies, like modern magnetizers, out of sight and out of contact, who, vouching for the effects of their art upon their credulous patients, dupe them out of the most exorbitant payments. Ministers seemed determined that the proverbial credulity of Englishmen should not, in the present instance, be deemed fabulous.

Sickness began to force the British troops from their unhealthy position before Breda. For the short temporary inaction of the French Government, immediately after the death of Robespierre, had allowed them an unexpected respite, which they might have profited of, had they taken up a position in its
nature

nature tenable : preparations were made, and a pontoon bridge thrown over the Meuse at Grave, to enable them to retire in safety upon the first advance of the enemy towards Nimeguen on the left side of the Waal. By the fall of Valenciennes, Le Quesnoy, Landrecies and Condé, a very large part of the enemy's army was now at liberty to operate against the Allies.

There had been for some time a dearth of intelligence from our armies on the Continent, when the expectations of the Nation were suddenly damped by the publication of an Extraordinary Gazette, the usual herald of joyful tidings to the people, announcing to us the melancholy necessity of flying before the enemy, almost without resistance. A cautious and prudent retreat may command the admiration and even gratitude of thinking men, but the report of a British army flying before the enemy is little flattering to a British ear, little congenial with British spirit : no man

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could

could read the account of his Royal Highness's situation, without carrying up the emotions of his humbled sympathy to the responsibility of those men, whose rash counsels had driven him into the fatal necessity.

“ The hazard of an action, with such a
 “ very great disparity of numbers, could not
 “ but become a matter of the most serious
 “ consideration ; and after the most mature
 “ deliberation, I did not think myself at
 “ liberty to risk, in so unequal a contest,
 “ his Majesty's troops, or those of his Allies
 “ serving with them. I had the utmost
 “ reliance on their courage and discipline,
 “ and I had no doubt, but that these would
 “ have enabled me to resist the first efforts
 “ of the enemy : but it could scarcely be
 “ expected, that even by the utmost exer-
 “ tion of these qualities they would be able
 “ to withstand the reiterated attacks, which
 “ the vast superiority of the enemy would
 “ enable them to make, and which we know
 “ from experience is a general principle
 5 “ from

“ from which they act. Actuated by these
 “ reasons, and the further information which
 “ I received about noon, that the enemy
 “ were marching considerable columns to-
 “ wards my left, in which part my position
 “ was most vulnerable, I determined on re-
 “ treating across the Meuse.”

Were his Royal Highness's reasons for retreating, local, temporary, or accidental, they might justify indeed the present retreat, but would at the same time have been irrelevant to the progress of his army or the continuance of the war. But when we find the motives for this retrograde motion from the enemy to be the great *disparity of numbers*, and *the vast superiority which he knew from experience was a general principle upon which they acted*, is it not truly astonishing that they operate not upon the minds of this whole nation a conviction of the impracticability of continuing this desperate contest against an enemy likely to augment the disparity of their numbers, by detaching our Allies from the confederacy,

and increasing their superiority from our infatuated conduct in the fatal contest?

General La Tour commanded a very large body of the Austrians in and about Liege: they were attacked and defeated with very heavy loss by General Jourdan, notwithstanding the strong positions they had every where seized in that uneven and mountainous country: thus again the principality of Liege fell into the possession of the French, to the great joy and exultation of the commonalty, who could scarcely be restrained from falling upon the Austrians as they were retiring from the town. General Clairfait, who since the resignation of Prince Cobourg, had commanded the army, had kept for some time his position between Liege and Maestricht, awaiting the determination of his Court, either to retreat into the hereditary states of his Sovereign, or to attempt another co-operation with his Maritime Allies. Whether the refusal of Holland to provide the necessary stores and magazines for the Austrian army within
 4 their

their States, the reluctance of Great Britain to pay down in advance any sum of money demanded, from a well-founded dread of something like Prussian perfidy*, or the Emperor's resolution of totally withdrawing from the desperate cause, produced a backwardness in forming a junction, is as yet unknown to the public: certain however it is, that many negotiations were attempted between these Powers, and that hitherto no other visible or sensible effect had been produced than reciprocal contempt, diffidence and reproach amongst these disjointed Allies. Well, indeed, might the Duke of Brunswick complain of *want of connection and distrust*; and represent their armies acting *without any fixed plan, without unanimity, and without principle*. For ten or twelve days previous to the evacuation of Liege, had General Clairfait been almost daily

* It was in this month that our Ministers thought it adviseable to stop their hand from continuing to pay *this slippery ally*, after having rewarded his breach of treaty with the exorbitant sum of 1,200,000l.

attacked by the French, and mostly to his disadvantage: upon one of these days, according to the Austrian account, they fought from four o'clock in the morning till eight in the evening, and they own that they lost between three and four thousand men: but say they, "The French passed the river Ourte by performing prodigies, not of valour, but of fury; so that their loss is said to amount to from ten to twelve thousand men." General Kray, with the troops under his command, was forced to retreat to Maestricht in consequence of the movement of General Clairfait towards Aix-la-Chapelle.

The successes of the Republicans in Spain only served to make them more lenient and moderate to the conquered; their general orders announced death to their soldiers, who pillaged or committed any outrage upon the defenceless inhabitants of the Spanish territories. Like successes and like consequences attended them in Italy.

The

The conquest of Corfica being now completed, we are favoured with the third and last act of this interesting piece. The surrender of the town of Calvi, after a siege of fifty-one days, was announced with the most pompous solemnity.

The conclusion of the whole was a grand pageantry, particularly adapted to revive the feelings of the spectators, almost worn down with the pathetic scenes of harassed and distressed Monarchs. The ancient hereditary imperial crown of Corfica was brought by a deputation of four doughty knights selected from the aristocracy of that renowned kingdom, and laid at the feet of his Britannic Majesty: it was then graciously admitted to the honourable contact of the more splendid diadems of Great Britain and Ireland. The spectators were favoured with a view of a piece of exquisite workmanship, in which the crown came over, as the first fruits of the industrious and ingenious inhabitants of our newly-acquired kingdom: a model of the British
Con-

Constitution in miniature, with some slight, but very judicious alterations and improvements upon the original. The first exhibition of this new and marvellous afterpiece went off with uncommon applause ; but the enormous expences of keeping up the machinery and decorations will probably prevent that frequency of its repetition, which the lovers of this species of entertainment would wish. Particular subscriptions are spoken of, to keep it up as a *stock play*.

Sir Gilbert Elliott was appointed the first *Viceroy* of Corsica. His short reign at Toulon was rather ominous to his entry into this newly acquired kingdom. Hitherto he has continued to represent Royalty without interruption, and with suitable dignity. The prolific returns of this opulent kingdom will undoubtedly afford a munificent salary for his extraordinary performance of this important part. A superb service of plate has been sent out to add splendour to his royal establishment.

So

So zealous and so ingenious are our present Ministers in the pursuit of their grand object, which has ever appeared to be a continuance of a foreign war for domestic purposes, that the victory gratifies little, which does not add a gordian nooze to the already entangled maze of obstacles to pacification. Why was the Island of Corsica, a part of the French Republic, taken possession of in a different manner from the Island of Martinico, another part of [that same Republic? This latter may be restored (if still in our possession) with as little ceremony or consequence as if it had not been taken. But for the restoration of the Corsican bauble, the pledged engagement of our Monarch to maintain their new Constitution must be violated, a solemn treaty deliberately broken, a monarchy extinguished, and its venerable emblems, the sceptre and the crown, prostituted to the profanation of Republican impiety. Had but the daggered Knight fore-

foreseen these deeds of prowess, idly would he have bemoaned the fall of Chivalry*.

Little satisfied, it seems, were his Majesty's War Ministers with the operations of the Army, as the new Secretary at War found his presence more necessary in the Camp than in the War-Office. What effect this modern Phinehas operated in the camp, is likely to remain a Cabinet secret. Sanguine as he appears on all occasions for accomplishing his ultimate views, it is apprehended that in this first essay of his zeal, he was forced to return, *re infectâ*. We observe, however, certain measures of defensive prudence adopted about the time of his excursion: the British troops fell

* It is instructive and curious to reflect, that this Government once settled, and still pays a pension of 2000l. per ann. to General Paoli, as a token of the generous sympathy of Britons with a free people struggling for their independence against the despotism of an absolute Monarch. The consideration for the pension has not been lately expressed in the General's receipts. The case is altered.

back

back and crossed the Rhine at Nimeguen : and a cordon of 30,000 troops was very judiciously formed along the South Eastern Coast of this Island, consisting of militia, fencibles, and new raised corps.

These internal preparations against foreign danger, fell far short of that energetic ingenuity, which the French proved in the invention of the Telegraph. For great national purposes, nothing ever equalled this invention, either in ancient or modern improvements. It is one of the most useful effects of their stupendous exertions. The Telegraph consists of upright posts, erected on heights, at the distance of twelve or fifteen miles from each other : on each post are two transverse arms, which are moveable in all directions with extreme rapidity, by means of a single piece of mechanism. The position and forms of these arms stand for different letters or ciphers agreed upon between the persons at the two extremities. Though the number of forms into which these arms may be worked is definite, yet
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the combination either by way of letters or ciphers is almost indefinite, and the meaning always arbitrary and changeable. So incredible has been the success of the experiment, that the account of the surrender of Condé at six o'clock in the morning was communicated to the Convention before nine o'clock on the same day : a vote immediately passed for acknowledging the good services of the army of the North was conveyed to the army, and an answer received from the army, by the Telegraph, before the Convention separated for dinner. This extreme velocity of conveying intelligence appears rather fabulous than real ; but it is ascertained beyond doubt, that words and sentences can be communicated at the inconceivable rate of 100 miles in the hour. The inventor of this admirable instrument for propagating intelligence is Monsieur Chappe. The perfection to which it was brought in the first instance speaks loudly that laudable attention and energy which France has lately discovered in every improvement of art and science.

Less

Less anxious did the Ministers appear for the success of our arms abroad, than for that of their own manœuvres at home. Melancholy indeed was it to behold the wretchedness and distresses of our armies on the Continent; abandoned and duped by the Prussians; unsupported by the Imperialists; execrated and opposed by the Dutch; worn down by disease, and disheartened by inaction and retreats; they were driven like sand before the whirlwind of French impetuosity. The Cabinet had however a ready and pliant majority to reward the perfidy of Prussia with 1,200,000*l.* to load their country with 6,000,000*l.* more for the precarious hazard of some future co-operation of the Emperor, to vote the Dutch cordial in resisting the French, to pass a Bill of Health to the British troops, and criminate the audacious sceptic of their success and victory. These were distant objects, operating but slow and uncertain effects upon the senses of a people supinely prodigal of their confidence in the Minister. He however was determined to ensure successful eclat to the autumnal exhibition

which

which he now had in rehearsal. He had the cautious forethought to try the effect of the first act at Edinburgh, before he brought the whole piece before a London audience. He was not insensible that a failure in his first essay, even upon a country theatre, would damp the assiduity and ardour for the necessary rehearsals, disappoint the elevated expectancies of the public, and prevent any returns to answer the unprecedented expences of getting up the piece.

The Minister was peculiarly judicious in selecting the first subject for trial in Robert Watt. He was indicted of High Treason, tried, found guilty and hanged. Ill would it become me to arraign the verdict found against this man. Some circumstances however of his trial seriously call upon every man's reflection. He was charged in the indictment, not only generally with others, of having attempted to subvert the government and usurp to himself and others the whole powers of government within the kingdom, &c. but more especially, of "consulting con-

" cerning

“ cerning the seizing of the Castle of Edin-
 “ burgh by force, with pikes, guns, battle-
 “ axes, &c. and also upon the Excise-office
 “ and Banks: of seizing upon the Justice
 “ Clerk, Lords of Justiciary and Session, and
 “ Lord Provost of Edinburgh: of agreeing
 “ to be aiding in these conspiracies: and of
 “ instigating other persons to assist them in
 “ carrying the same into execution: of buy-
 “ ing and procuring to be made pikes,
 “ spears, battle-axes, &c. for the above
 “ purposes, &c: of persuading the peo-
 “ ple to send money to David Downie, and
 “ to purchase pikes, &c. for the purpose of
 “ arming themselves.” As the verdict spe-
 cifies not upon what particular part of the
 evidence it is founded, we can only speak
 from our judgment of such parts of it as
 appear most probably to have affected the
 Jury. The evidence, as to Watt’s inten-
 tion, or wish, or overt act for seizing the
 castle, judges, &c. and the project of divert-
 ing the soldiers, by lighting a fire at the Ex-
 cise, &c. whilst the people at their com-
 mand were to pillage the Banks, seemed to

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make

make peculiar impresson upon the Jury. Evidence was given that Watt had read a paper before six persons of such a plan, and had by overt acts clearly expressed such his treasonable intention : for this alone might he most deservedly have been found guilty.

Besides this vast design of seizing the castle, prisons, and the persons of the Justices and Lords of Session, and all the chief Magistrates of Edinburgh, it was proved that Watt had read to others a draft of a proclamation to all farmers not to remove their grain, and to gentlemen not to remove from their houses above three miles, under pain of death, &c. which was to be issued immediately upon the success of the first part of the plan. No degree of punishment could certainly be too severe for the extreme malice even of imagining these horrid and wicked designs. But when we come to reflect seriously upon the nature of the plans and the preparations necessary to carry them into effect, we must adapt our judgment

judgment upon the reality of the conspiracy to the means and number of persons prepared for the execution of it. After the fullest evidence that could be produced, the exact number of forty-seven pikes or spears that were supposed to have been fabricated for these nefarious purposes, were proved to be the only instruments pretended even to be prepared for subverting the government of North Britain. So much malice in the nature of this conspiracy; so little attention to any efficient means of ensuring its success; such incautious parade on the part of Watt in many other circumstances liable to constructive connection and privacy with it; the show of arms in his own house, carry upon their very face the most unequivocal marks of a plot formed, not for the purpose of overturning the government, but of converting the discovery into the wicked engine of criminating and punishing those societies, to which it was the wish of many to bring home the pretended guilt.

We have had recent and frequent in-
R 2 stances

stances of the attempts of hired spies and informers to seduce and provoke warm and unsuspicious friends of liberty into measures of violence. If Watt like Perillus found in the Right Honourable Secretary Dundas a Phalaris to sacrifice him to his own inventive cruelty, he most justly met the fate, that should ever reward the baseness of such venal miscreants. In this honourable light stood Robert Watt: a hired spy in the pay of government: a sure and fair sacrifice therefore to his employers. Mr. Clerk the Sheriff Depute of Edinburgh deposed, that, when Watt was first apprehended, he declined giving any answer to questions until he had procured the licence of his employers, the Lord Advocate and Mr. Secretary Dundas. And the Lord Advocate, when he was sworn in court, declared, that Watt had offered his services to him in October 1792 to act as a spy upon the popular societies at Edinburgh: that his Lordship had recommended him to Mr. Secretary Dundas: and that he was ever after trusted by those in power, being thought faithful.

That

That he gave several pieces of information to him concerning these societies, and often came to his Lordship's house when it was dark : that some of his information concerning soldiers being tampered with by the Friends of the People proved to be false. He had also informed him, that two persons of his acquaintance had offered to disclose a matter of great importance, but they demanded 1000*l.* to be first paid to them : this was refused : however, Watt procured 30*l.* for a bill which he said he had given to them and paid. This attempted artifice to extort a thousand pounds from his employers very naturally removed from them any delicacy in sacrificing him to their own views. It was thought of infinite consequence to the cause, that the first accused of the general conspiracy to subvert the government and murder the Sovereign by means of attempting a reform in Parliament should not escape. The experiment was successful, though not fair. He was justly condemned : but his guilt was not an attempt at parliamentary reform. His

execution produced compassion from no party, he died execrated by all. David Downie was also indicted for High Treason as an accomplice with Watt; and although the evidence were not so strong against him as against Watt, he was notwithstanding found guilty; but the Jury, on account of certain circumstances unanimously recommended the prisoner to mercy. He has not as yet been executed, having been already several times respited. Thus ended the prelude to the grand piece which was now in daily rehearsal for the London Theatre.

The blood of Robert Watt was a just propitiation to his offended country, whether he really had the wicked design of attempting, or the baser motive of involving the innocent in this pretended conspiracy. Not a tittle of evidence has however been produced, either on the trial of Watt or Downie, that tended to criminate any of the Societies for Parliamentary Reform in England or Scotland, for being privy to or even remotely complicated in the extravagant

gant and impracticable plot, of upsetting the whole government of North Britain with forty-seven spears in the hands of seven individuals. Watt never became a Member of any of these Societies, and Downie was a Member of the Friends of the People. Yet Watt procured constant admission to them by false pretences and undertakings, for the base purpose of carrying information from them to Government, and probably with the still more iniquitous view of working up grounds for such information. Now, that the long and deep concerted plan of the Cabinet, to expiate the pretended treason of associating for a Parliamentary Reform with the blood of its warmest advocates, has undergone a full and complete experiment; Englishmen ought to examine minutely every part of the scheme, that they may unravel and bring to light the entangled and *dark fed-racy against their freedom.*

No sooner was the success of this first act known in London, than it encouraged the

Managers to prepare immediately for the grand exhibition. The connection of the plot, the shifting of the scenes, and the wonderful deception of the machinery, are now to be viewed *gratis* by all the curious, since the piece has been thrice damned by the audience on so many separate performances. Such had been the confidence of success, that it was at first announced for twelve successive nights, and the whole company, with an unexampled troop of attendants, servants, mutes, prompters, &c. &c. were accordingly retained at the most exorbitant salaries: none of the stale and hackneyed arts of inflated merit and anticipated success were omitted. To these were superadded, the racked ingenuity and inventive practices of all that lived by the bounty or expected the favours of the Managers. The lore of erudition, the gravity of criticism, the imagery and pathos of romance, were all let loose to pre-occupy the judgement and engage the passions of the expectant public.

Robert Watt was found guilty on the
4th,

4th, and David Downie on the 5th of the current month. As we had not as yet established a Telegraph from Edinburgh to London, it required near four days instead of so many hours to convey to the Minister the joyful tidings of success in this first essay. On the next morning after the receipt of the dispatches, viz. on the 10th of the month, a Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer was issued under the Great Seal of Great Britain, to enquire of certain High Treasons and Misprisions of Treason within the County of Middlesex.

Some days before the opening of the Commission, when the whole Nation was appalled by the detestable villainy of Watt, and the discovery of his daring and extensive plan of rooting up and assuming the government of North Britain, by seizing the Castle, Judges, Magistrates, Banks, Excise, and all that was opulent and powerful at Edinburgh, with six associates, and two score and seven halberts; when every agitated alarmist soothed and softened his
 terrors

terrors by foreboding a bloody issue to the Special Commission : when the enemies to Parliamentary Reform had already transferred the guilt of its pretended advocate Robert Watt to every member of every popular association for reform throughout the kingdom ; when the public mind was in a blaze at the first realizing of all the horrors and calamities discovered and denounced by the Secret Committees ; when diffidence and suspicion prejudged, and bare difference of opinion stigmatized the traitor : then were the feelings and real sentiments of loyalty called into action by the solemn annunciation of a plot to assassinate his Majesty.

In order to see distinctly how this horrid assassination plot worked its effect upon the minds and passions of an agitated and affrighted public, we should first call to our recollection what the Lord Chief Justice Eyre told the Grand Jury at the opening of the Commission. “ That which hath
 “ given occasion for this Commission is that,
 “ which is declared by a late statute, name-
 “ ly,

“ ly, *That a traitorous and detestable conspi-*
 “ *racy has been formed for subverting the ex-*
 “ *isting Laws and Constitution, and for intro-*
 “ *ducing the system of anarchy and confusion*
 “ *which has so lately prevailed in France :—a*
 “ crime of that deep malignity, which
 “ loudly calls upon the justice of the Na-
 “ tion to interpose, *for the better preservation*
 “ *of his Majesty’s sacred person, and for se-*
 “ *curing the peace and the laws and liberties*
 “ *of this kingdom.*” Foul as was the conspi-
 racy of Watt, it would have been difficult
 to persuade the people, even in their present
 paroxysm of credulity, that he had actually
 attempted the life of his Sovereign. His
 case went no further, than to verify this re-
 cital of the act in proving an attempt *to sub-*
vert the existing Laws and Constitution, and
for introducing the system of anarchy and con-
fusion which has so lately prevailed in France.
 The old statute which defines Treason
 by the law of England, is the 25th Ed-
 ward III. by which it is declared to be High
 Treason to compass or imagine the death of
 the King. The uniform construction of
 this

this act has been, that the *compassing and imagining* must be manifested by some overt act or acts proved by two witnesses to have been done by the party accused in prosecution of that compassing or imagination. As the late statute, which gave occasion to this Commission, avers the fact of a treasonable conspiracy existing in the nation; in order to meet the prejudices of the illiterate, as well as the fears and alarms of the instructed, the assertion of the Legislature was to be proved to go as well to the literal as to the constructive meaning of the Act of Edward III.

The *dramatis personæ* of this under-plot were all members of some Society for procuring a Parliamentary Reform: and as the conspiracy asserted by the Act of Parliament to exist, was supposed, and had already been partly proved to have originated in them, every ramification of it sprung necessarily and received life from the common root, which was a wish or pretence to procure a Reform in Parliament. By the direction

direction of a Justice (Mr. Ford), a warrant was procured from the Duke of Portland for arresting John Peter Le Maitre, a native of Jersey and apprentice to a watch-case-maker; and William Higgins, apprentice to a chymist: Smith, a bookseller, and Beck, a sadler, were also taken up: Upton, a watch-maker was the approver. The charge, supported only by the testimony of Upton, was, that these apprentices had formed the horrid project of attempting to assassinate his Majesty with a poisoned dart, that was to be blown through a brass tube inserted in a walking-stick to prevent suspicion. The arrow which was produced to the Privy Council was examined by Mr. Mortimer the gunsmith, and reported by him to be a most ingenious piece of mechanism. The prisoners were almost daily examined before the Privy Council, and generally in the presence of the Attorney and Solicitor General, Mr. Ford, and others. The examinations were carried on to the opening of the Special Commission,

and

and the Charge delivered to the Grand Jury. The sensation which the horror of this infernal conspiracy naturally produced upon the public mind, was little calculated to disannex it from the late trials at Edinburgh, or the bills preferred against members of the same society to the Grand Jury under the Special Commission. The actual result of these examinations was the confinement of Upton the approver. He was known to have vowed vengeance against Le Maitre and Higgins, at a Committee of the Society from which he had been expelled for malpractices: he was known and proved to have acted as a spy to Government. The whole of this tremendous assassination plot was a malicious and artful fabrication of Upton. However, the innocent victims of his iniquity were still confined; their discharge might have cleared away the impressions which their accusation had created. The Habeas Corpus Act, alas! is still suspended. Whether Upton or his employers and instigators were the more responsible for this unreasonable

reasonable and unjust alarm for the personal safety of our Sovereign, more temperate times will hereafter disclose.

In the intermediate space of time between the Parliament's having declared and asserted the actual existence of a conspiracy to subvert the Government and Constitution, and the trial of those individuals against whom the treasonable charge was laid, there occurred a circumstance which had nearly produced consequences of the last importance to the Nation ; for though we be not warranted to charge Ministers with the direct intent of criminating by these circumstances the State Prisoners, yet cannot we fairly detach and disannex them from a design of disposing the public mind towards crediting the Legislature for assuming the actual guilt of the accused.

One of the great evils of war in a free country, is the encouragement given to deceit, fraud, and cruelty in procuring recruits for the service. When the war is in
itself

itself unpopular, the bounties to recruits arise in proportion to the general reluctance to enlist. When the bounty money is at the highest, the more extensive and subtle is the system of turning it to account through all the subordinate gradations of the military brokers, from the Commissioned Officer down to the unfortunate recruit. He too often is seduced by the incautious acceptance of a scanty relic of the clipt and sweat-ed bounty that at length reaches the hand for which it was originally intended full and entire. The recruiting houses in London, kept by crimps and kidnappers, were the general scenes of the enormities committed in this atrocious and inhuman traffic. Debauchery and intoxication, the general means of seduction into the engagement; force, cruelty, and sometimes perjury, the remedy against repentance in the moment of returning sobriety and reflection; these evils will ever exist as long as the present recruiting system is continued.

In the neighbourhood of Charing Cross
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is a court called Johnson's-court, notorious for disorderly and alarming scenes of debauchery and cruelty. Here one Mrs. Hanna kept for these purposes six houses, which were contiguous, and communicated by secret avenues with one another. She had frequently been indicted, and was at this time under actual prosecution, though her trial had for some unknown reasons been put off. The indignation and sympathy of the people were aroused by a melancholy catastrophe in this court. The neighbourhood had for some days been alarmed by the cries of violence and murder in some of these houses: from the frequency of such occurrences, little notice and attention were paid to the alarm. In the morning, however, the unfortunate young man who had so frequently cried out for mercy was seen on the roof of the house in his shirt, in apparent great agony, as if closely pursued from within; and upon the approach of his pursuers, he threw himself in despair from the tiles and was dashed to pieces on the flags of the court. The bruised and

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disfigured

disfigured corpse bore every appearance of the unfortunate victim's having been in a genteel line of life. He was afterwards proved to have been at times insane. The mob however felt from what they saw: it was for others to examine how far his insanity were known, and would justify his detention as a recruit for his Majesty's service. The people assembled, and began to give symptoms of alarming discontent: they called for vengeance against the persons to whose door they laid the untimely and shocking death of this young gentleman. The Magistrates, who first arrived, made slight of the matter, and believed or pretended to believe that the youth had thrown himself out of the window in the delirium of a fever: they took no step to secure the persons who had him in care, charge, or detention; at which the mob became more outrageous. Curiosity had brought to the spot, amongst others, Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Grey: the former being in the Commission of the Peace somewhat appeased the mob, by signing a warrant to search the house

of

of Jaques a notorious crimp, where they found an unfortunate wretch in the height of the small-pox, smothering in a loathsome cell: he was instantly removed with care, under the direction of a medical gentleman, and was found to be the son of a farmer near Maidstone. It is presumed that the other less disabled victims had been removed by Jaques, at the first appearance of the indignation of the mob. By the earnest entreaties of Messrs. Sheridan and Grey, the mob dispersed for the present, and appeared satisfied with their assurances that the business should be looked into, and full justice done. The Coroner took his inquest upon the body of the deceased youth, and the Jury brought in their verdict, *Killed in attempting to escape from a house of ill fame.*

The mob collected again in the evening, but were prevented by the military from committing any outrage: they returned, however, the next morning, and entirely gutted the houses of these crimps, scatter-

ing the furniture, bedding, and feathers about the court. They cried out for justice and vengeance against the crimps and kidnappers. A detachment of the Horse Guards dispersed them, and carried six boys to the Office in Bow Street. Alarming as were these discontents and murmurs of the mob, it must ever appear surprising, that no steps whatever were taken by Government to bring forth the guilty causes of their complaints, in order to assuage or soften their just resentment and indignation at these practices of inhumanity. Serious is the duty of Governors to attend to the complaints of real abuses. Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Grey, and several other gentlemen, who attended at the Office in Bow Street, expressed their astonishment that no warrants had been issued to apprehend the parties concerned in the inhuman practices, which had in fact raised the mob, though Mr. Sheridan had on the preceding evening sent to the sitting magistrates a list of their names, as well as of such of their neighbours as were ready to give evidence against them.

them. The magistrates declined acting, without particular orders from Government: Mr. Sheridan himself signed a warrant for apprehending Jaques, stating the place where he was then secreted. He however received previous intelligence of the warrant, and had escaped before the officer arrived. Such conduct from Government was little calculated to suppress the now-fermented passions of the mob. The military constantly patrolled the streets, and different mobs began to form in different places, and perhaps upon different grounds: pity it is that they should have a *just* cause to murmur. This alarm continued for about six or seven days, in the course of which they attacked and pillaged or damaged several recruiting offices, in Holborn, Shoe Lane, Bride Lane, Long Lane, Smithfield, Barbican, Golden Lane, Moorfields, White Chapel, Clerkenwell, and Drury Lane. Some shots were fired, but generally no resistance was offered to the military; admirable was their temperate forbearance in the midst of such insult and

provocation as will always happen from the actual assembly of an idle, curious, or malevolent rabble, which they have it in charge to disperse. It is to be wished, that proper caution had been used to prevent provocation being given to the people, who will ever act more from feeling than from reason and judgment. Steps were taken to look into the nature of these abuses; though complaints were loudly made by some, that no efficient measures were pursued effectually to correct them. The spirit of riot subsided without any further consequences: and the Horse Guards ceased to patrol the streets. Thus the inhabitants of London exhibited an admirable example of steady moderation in stifling the vivacity of their emotions, and resisting the temptation or the snares laid for betraying them into acts of violence.

CHAPTER X.

OCTOBER.

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The Ground of the present System was the Prevention of a Parliamentary Reform—Ministerial Influence upon Parliament—To destroy it is the Object of the Reforming Societies—Nature of a Scotch Jury—Lord Chief Justice Eyre's Charge to the Grand Jury—The Nature of the Act of Parliament which gave Rise to the Commission—Danger of dissolving the Government—Mr. Locke's Thoughts thereupon—Strictures upon the Chief Justice's Charge—True Bill found against Twelve—Four of them still at large—Mr. Holcroft voluntarily surrenders himself—Methods practised to keep up the Fermentation of the Public—Farther Particulars of Watt's Infamy—His Confession a gross Imposture—French Officers taken into Pay for 30,000 Men—Extraordinary Measure of reviving the Irish Brigade—Strange Conduct of the Duke of Portland—Dictatorial Powers given to the Stadtholder—Zealand proposes to the other States to negotiate for Peace—The Court Influence prevents it—Successes of the French—Bois-le-Duc surrenders—Clair-

fait defeated—crosses the Rhine—Stand in Bommel Waart—French cross the Waal—Duke of York retreats—The Dutch want Peace—Apply for Leave to transport their Effects and Treasures to England—Are refused.

IF it ever concerned the people of England to know the real principles, upon which the system of government and the public interests of the nation were conducted, it certainly is in that hour, in which the largest supplies and levies are called for; in which the most violent and severe measures are adopted by the executive and legislative powers; in which the piteous solace of complaint under disasters is nearly converted into guilt and criminality. The utility of a fresh narrative of facts consists less in the advantage of minute detail, than in the opportunity of tracing to the real and genuine source, the spirit and principle which produced them: my object is not to retail the minute circumstances which have attended the great national occurrences, but to shew in what manner they form a part of the general system, and therefore

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fore necessarily draw with them consequences which involve the dearest interests of the people.

The real ground of action in this new system was the prevention of a parliamentary reform; the advisers and conductors of it assumed, that an attempt to reform the popular representation would at once let in the whole ocean of horrors and disasters of the French revolution. To keep up therefore in the nation a hatred and dread of the French revolutionary system, they fatally involved them in a most bloody and ruinous war abroad, and at home they attempted to affix the criminality of high treason upon attempts to procure a reform in the representation of the people.

We have seen with astonishment and grief all the powers of our government, in despite of disaster, failure and impracticability, combined to prevent pacification, and to father upon the nation the odium and criminality of a conspiracy to overturn its govern-

government, and destroy its constitution. Such we have seen to be the unlimited confidence in the Minister, that, at his bare assurance, the two Houses of Parliament have pledged their faith and credit with the public for the real existence of this horrid conspiracy: so prodigal were they of their confidence as to forego even the decent form of investigating the *ex parte* evidence that was to be submitted to the Select Committees, upon whose reports the necessary measures were to be adopted. It is however as notorious as it is incredible, that the bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act, which is grounded upon the averment of *the conspiracy having been actually formed*, received the Royal Assent (on the 23d of May) about three weeks before the Reports from the Committees were made to both Houses. Happy is it for the nation, that the Minister's assurance did not attempt one step further, and recommend an enumeration of the names of the conspirators in the Act, which would have superseded the necessity of sending the prisoners to trial. To counteract

teract and defeat the effects of such ministerial influence in Parliament, is the avowed object of every association for parliamentary reform: this legislative charge of a traitorous conspiracy has unfortunately brought the governors and governed into a full collision; nor has either party as yet recovered from the violence of the concussion.

I have already spoken of the success of the first essay to crush the spirit of reform, in the condemnation of Watt and Downie at Edinburgh. Though the confidence of the Ministry in the effect of this first experiment was such, that within twelve hours after they had received the accounts the whole line of batteries were opened upon the different reforming squadrons, by sealing the special commission; yet, to the more reflecting, the same prospect of success did not present itself, from a similar operation on the south as on the north of the Tweed. However strong the similarity of guilt, however congenial the spirit and disposition of the accusers and accused, however

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aggravated the circumstances, by numbers, power, talents, influence, and opportunity, of the southern beyond the northern conspirators, yet there existed the greatest of all possible differences in producing the ultimate effect, the direct operation of the influence of the accusers upon those who were to try the accused. It is the pride and boast of an Englishman, that, if persecuted or accused unjustly, he shall secure himself in trial by a free, disinterested and uninfluenced Jury: could he thus plume himself in his surety, were his jurors to be nominated by his accusers?

In Scotland, the different method of choosing a Jury from that used in England fully accounts for a dissimilarity of verdicts: the Sheriff of Edinburgh is always a lawyer, appointed by and removable from his office at the will of the Crown: he is a Judge both in civil and criminal matters: it is by virtue of his warrants that malefactors are originally apprehended and brought before him for examination; and upon *finding cause* by him,

him, they are committed to gaol for trial. He likewise makes out a list of forty-five persons, from which number fifteen are chosen by the Lord Chief Justice to try the prisoner. Well indeed might the Lord Advocate of Scotland boast, that this law was better calculated to punish State crimes than that of England, and seriously recommend it to the adoption of his employers. It would indeed insure, without risk, chance, or doubt, a full coincidence with the Reports of Secret Committees, and an unqualified adoption of the sense of any Minister's majority in Parliament.

Englishmen, who under the blackest of accusations find a serenity in conscious innocence, because they know that an uninfluenced Jury will try them, are well justified in viewing their Representatives in Parliament as the Grand Inquest of the Nation : they insist upon having as much security for impartiality and firmness from their attornies and stewards, whom they depute to

arbitrate and manage their concerns, as they find in twelve freeholders out of the reach of bias or influence from the enjoyment or prospect of place, pension, or patronage, disentangled from every view or engagement of party, and looking down with indifference and contempt upon the frowns, menaces, or allurements of the great. The advocates for parliamentary reform see no security for the interests of the people, but when they shall be really intrusted with such persons as can attend to them with the unfettered freedom of an English Jury. They claim the right of challenging every man within the bias or influence of an interest which is not emphatically their own: they will disside in every steward or attorney who acts for their rival or opponent; who receives pay from him; who even enjoys his confidence: they will give up their freedom from the moment they can be charged with a Court conspiracy, and tried for it by the appointees of the managers of the plot: their senses are not yet
suffi-

sufficiently refined to discriminate the time,
 or the force of the electric shock at every
 link down to the extremity of the chain
 that is fastened in the Exchequer. Under
 a charge made by Royal Proclamation, re-
 ported to be well founded by Secret Com-
 mittees of Parliament, and declared to exist
 by an Act of the Legislature, an Englishman
 would equally foresee his fate, whether to
 be tried by fifteen Privy Counsellors, fifteen
 Members of the Secret Committees, or
 fifteen Scotch Jurymen appointed by the
 Officer of the Crown. The great question
 between the representatives and the repre-
 sented was now brought to a fair and awful
 issue, before an English Jury, whether the
 treasonable conspiracy, announced in the
 King's message to Parliament, reported to
 have been formed by Select Committees of
 both Houses, and declared positively to
 exist by Act of Parliament, have or have not,
 really existed? The question involves the
 fate of the British empire; it tries the con-
 fidence of the Nation in their representa-
 tives as now constructed; it determines
 whether

whether that construction shall remain unreformed.

Upon the opening of the Commission*, and the swearing in of the Grand Jury, Lord Chief Justice Eyre gave them a very solemn charge, which was so much admired by the gentlemen of the Grand Jury, that by their desire, even before the trials, it was printed and circulated through the nation. Having been thus published, pending the proceedings, as a pamphlet, it became open to criticism, and gave rise to some very pointed strictures, which I shall hereafter have some occasion to mention. He expressly tells the Grand Jury, " That which hath given " occasion for this Commission, is that which

* There were present Sir James Eyre, Knt. Sir Archibald Macdonald, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer; Sir Beaumont Hotham, Knt. one of the Barons of the Exchequer; Sir Nash Grose, Knt. one of the Judges of the King's Bench; Sir Francis Buller, Bart. one of the Judges of the Common Pleas; and Sir Foulden Lawrence, one of the Judges of the King's Bench, and other his Majesty's Justices, &c.

" is

“ is declared by a late statute, namely,
 “ *that a traitorous and detestable conspiracy has*
 “ *been formed for subverting the existing laws*
 “ *and constitution, and for introducing the sys-*
 “ *tem of anarchy and confusion which has so late-*
 “ *ly prevailed in France.*” The very ground
 of the Commission essentially rests upon the
 truth of this recital in the Act of Parliament,
 and it would have been natural to assume
 that the truth of that recital depended upon
 the credit given to the reports of the Select
 Committees, before whom all the papers,
 plans and proceedings of the conspirators
 were laid. But the assurances of the Mi-
 nister superseded the necessity of awaiting
 these reports, and the Act passed before they
 were made.

The peculiarity of this Commission, under
 which the State prisoners were to be tried,
 must be taken in its national point of view:
 I shall therefore attend but slightly, if at all,
 to the facts produced in evidence at the trials,
 which might without material consequence
 to the State have tended to acquit or cri-

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minate the prisoners. The question in all these trials to be determined was, properly speaking, the truth or falsity of the Parliament in asserting, that *a traitorous and detestable conspiracy has been formed for subverting the existing laws and constitution, and for introducing the anarchy and confusion which has so lately prevailed in France*; for the conviction or acquittal of the prisoners ceased to be the case of an indifferent person indicted under a particular Act of Parliament, which declares a new crime, or affixes to it a new punishment. The Act was passed with the immediate view and intention of criminalizing the individuals who were the objects of the present prosecution. It was not an Act to declare or make any new offence: the Lord President assured the Grand Jury, that *this Act had given occasion to this Commission*: and from the circumstances already noticed, the whole wore the appearance of a State plan, to bring under the guilt of high treason the persons most active and forward in the cause of parliamentary reform. They had seized all the papers of the different societies,

cieties, and the persons of their secretaries and chief promoters. Before they began this parliamentary manœuvre, there remained no doubt, whether all the necessary parties to the plot were secured: no man fled; there was no concealment of papers; no denial of the facts which were attempted to be construed into treason. Parliament then, in immediate contemplation of the arrests of these persons and the seizure of their papers, at the instigation of the Minister, declares that *a traitorous conspiracy is formed*: that is, by those who then were in confinement, or others who were afterwards taken into custody. It is self-evident, that the Legislature had no other traitorous conspiracy in contemplation, than such as they judged these prisoners to be implicated in: the Act, therefore, as far as a recital will operate, was not only a charge, but a positive averment of their guilt, and of this the Lord President fairly warned the Grand Jury. “I hardly need give you this caution, that

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“ though

“ though it has been expressly declared by
 “ the highest authority, that there do exist
 “ in this country men capable of meditat-
 “ ing the destruction of the constitution
 “ under which we live, that declaration,
 “ being extra-judicial, is not a ground upon
 “ which you ought to proceed.” The
 truth, and consequently the validity of this
 legislative declaration became in fact the
 sole question to be tried: happy was it for
 the people, that there was within themselves
 a tribunal to decide the fate of those that
 had already been charged with and pre-
 judged guilty of high treason by the per-
 sons called their representatives, guardians,
 and protectors. The crisis becomes truly
 awful, when in a representative government
 the represented are driven to the alarming al-
 ternative of delivering up their innocent fel-
 low-citizens to the executioner, or proclaim-
 ing, by the verdict of their country*, that the
 most

* This is legally and constitutionally true; for
 when the Clerk of the Arraignment has read the indictment

most solemn Acts of their representatives and rulers are false and consequently unjust. When therefore in such a case, after a fair trial of the avowed principals in a conspiracy, after the full evidence of every fact and circumstance connected with the conspiracy, and of the words, acts and writings of the conspirators, THE COUNTRY acquits the prisoners, she pronounces in effect and substance a conclusive and awful judgment, that they were innocent of the charge, of which the legislature had prejudged the guilt:—a judgment confirming the intuitive penetration of Mr. Sheridan, who in the first shock of alarm asserted in the House of Commons, *that the conspiracy had no other existence than in the foul imagination of his Majesty's Ministers.*

In the present agitated and distressed state

to the prisoner, who is thereupon arraigned, and has pleaded Not guilty, he tells the Jury, that the prisoner hath put himself for his trial upon God and his Country, *which country you are.*

of the British empire, the great movements from the helm must be steadily viewed and vigorously acted upon in all their consequences and effects. The nation is stunned with the din of alarm : every thinking man is convinced that danger somewhere exists : the violence of the cause announces violence in the effect. The cement of the British constitution, by which the parts are united, is composed of the affectionate submission of the people to their Sovereign, their deference for the Peers, and their confidence in their Representatives. What therefore can so irresistibly lead to a dissolution of the government, as to bring into direct issue a charge and judgment of the governors against the governed for a *traitorous conspiracy*, which being the highest of all political crimes, is punished with the extremity of human rigour ? For man in the full extent of tyrannical malice cannot carry vengeance beyond the deprivation of life, fortune and reputation. In the present fury of prepossession, the warnings and predictions

tions even of the greatest men of the age have like oil but invigorated the flame*.

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* The reader will judge how far the present circumstances approach in reality to the cases upon which the great intellectual luminary John Locke has displayed such a blaze of irresistible truth. When we find a man endued with that strength of mind, that almost excels human intuition, so perspicuous and decisive upon these subjects of modern heated controversy, with immediate reference to the British Constitution, rash as dangerous would it be to charge him with falsity in reasoning or imprudence in publishing. *Locke on Civil Government*, b. ii. c. 9. "Whenever the *Legislators en-*
 " *deavour to take away and destroy the property of the*
 " *people*, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary
 " *power*, they put themselves into a state of war with
 " *the people*, who are thereupon absolved from any
 " *farther obedience*, and are left to the common re-
 " *fuge* which God hath provided for all men against
 " *force and violence*. Whensoever, therefore, the
 " *Legislative* shall transgress this fundamental rule of
 " *society*; and either by ambition, fear, folly or cor-
 " *ruption, endeavour to grasp themselves, or put into the*
 " *hands of any other, an absolute power* over the lives,
 " *liberties, and estates of the people*; by this breach of
 " *trust they forfeit the power* the people had put into
 " *their hands for quite contrary ends*, and it devolves
 " *to the people*, who have a right to resume their ori-

The fact exists, and with terror flashes conviction upon the most obdurate. Certain
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“ ginal liberty, and by the establishment of the new
“ Legislative (such as they shall think fit) provide for
“ their own safety and security, which is the end for
“ which they are in society. What I have said here
“ concerning the Legislative in general, holds true also
“ concerning the supreme Executor, who, having a
“ double trust put in him, both to have a part in the
“ legislative and the supreme execution of the law,
“ acts against both when he goes about to set up his
“ own arbitrary will as the law of the society. He *acts*
“ also *contrary to his trust*, when he either employs the
“ force, treasure, and offices of the society, to corrupt
“ the *Representatives*, and gain them to his purposes;
“ or openly pre-engages the *Electors*, and prescribes
“ to their choice such whom he has by solicitations,
“ threats, promises, or otherwise won to his designs;
“ and employs them to bring in such who have pro-
“ mised before-hand what to vote and what to enact.
“ Thus, to regulate Candidates and Electors, and new-
“ model the ways of election, what is it but to cut up
“ the government by the roots, and poison the very
“ fountain of public security? For the people having
“ reserved to themselves the choice of their *Represen-*
“ *tatives*, as the fence to their properties, could do it
“ for no other end but that they might always be
“ freely chosen, and, so chosen, freely act and advise

“ as

men have associated for the purpose, or, as their opponents say, under a pretence of procuring

“ as the necessity of the commonwealth and the public good should, upon examination and mature debate, be judged to require.”

And to the objection that this hypothesis lays a ferment for frequent rebellion he answers, first, “ When the people are made miserable, and find themselves *exposed to the ill usage of arbitrary power*, cry up their governors as much as you will for sons of *Jupiter*, let them be sacred and divine, descended or authorised from heaven ; give them out for whom or what you please, the same will happen. *The people generally ill treated* and contrary to right, will be ready upon any occasion to ease themselves of a burden that sits heavy upon them. They will wish and seek for the opportunity, which in the change, weakness and accidents of human affairs seldom delays long to offer itself.

“ *Secondly, revolutions happen* not upon every little mismanagement in public affairs. *Great mistakes* in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient laws, and all the *slips* of human frailty, will be borne by the people without mutiny or murmur. But if a long train of abuses, prevarications and artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the people, and they cannot but feel what they lie under, and see whither they are going, 'tis not to be wondered, that they should then rouse themselves, and

“ *endea-*

procuring a reform in the representation of the people. Such a measure would inevitably

“ endeavour to put the rule into such hands, which
 “ may secure to them the ends for which government
 “ was at first erected.

“ But if,” continues he, “ they who say *it lays a*
 “ *foundation for rebellion*, mean that it may occasion
 “ civil wars or intestine broils, to tell the people they
 “ are absolved from obedience, when illegal attempts
 “ are made upon their liberties or properties, and may
 “ oppose the unlawful violence of those who were their
 “ magistrates, when they invade their properties contrary to the trust put in them ; and that therefore
 “ this doctrine is not to be allowed, being so destructive to the peace of the world : they may as well say
 “ upon the same ground, that honest men may not oppose robbers or pirates, because this may occasion
 “ disorder or bloodshed. If any *mischiefs* come in such
 “ cases, it is not to be charged upon him who defends his own right, but *on him that invades* his
 “ neighbour’s. If the innocent honest man must quietly
 “ quit all he has for peace sake, to him who will lay
 “ violent hands upon it, I desire it may be considered,
 “ what a kind of peace there will be in the world,
 “ which consists only in violence and rapine ; and
 “ which is to be maintained only for the benefit of
 “ robbers and oppressors.

“ To this perhaps it will be said, that the people being

tably deprive many of the Members of their seats, and defeat the purposes and designs of the present system of administration. Parliament at their instigation proclaim these men guilty of high treason: for to declare by Act of Parliament that a traitorous conspiracy has been formed, when all the principal conspirators and their papers are

“ ing ignorant, and always discontented, to lay the
 “ foundation of government in the unsteady opinion
 “ and uncertain humour of the people, is to expose it
 “ to certain ruin; and *no government will be able long to*
 “ *subsist*, if the people may set up a new Legislative
 “ whenever they take offence at the old one. To this I
 “ answer, Quite the contrary. People are not so easily
 “ got out of their old forms, as some are apt to suggest.
 “ They are hardly to be prevailed with to amend the
 “ acknowledged faults in the frame they have been ac-
 “ customed to. And if there be any original defects,
 “ or adventitious ones introduced by time or corrup-
 “ tion; ’tis not an easy thing to get them changed, even
 “ when all the world sees there is an opportunity for
 “ it. This slowness and aversion in the people to quit
 “ their old Constitutions, has in the many revolutions
 “ which have been seen in this kingdom, in this and
 “ former ages, still kept us to, or, after some interval
 “ of fruitless attempts, still brought us back again to
 “ our old Legislative of King, Lords and Commons.”

taken

taken into custody, is in fact to declare the individuals guilty of the treason, since no other conspiracy is pretended to have existed than this in which the prisoners were principals. The only defensive weapon of an Englishman against the oppression of his governors is the trial by jury. But if after a verdict of acquittal he be still treated as a traitor or felon, if the Act averring the existence of the specific crime of which he has been fully and fairly acquitted, stand unrepealed, perhaps renewed upon the first records of the nation, who shall convince the people that their Representatives have faithfully preserved and guarded their rights and liberties? This is their only trust; and dreadful in the extreme will be the breach of it. If Great Britain have a domestic enemy, he is the man who countenances, provokes or co-operates in the breach. The progress of the formation and developing of this conspiracy cannot be too closely attended to.

The Lord Chief Justice Eyre, in his
charge

charge to the Grand Jury, confined himself to such high treason alone, which by 25 Ed. III. is described by the words, *compassing and imagining the death of the King*. They therefore were directed to find no bill true, which contained a charge of any other species of offence than this specific treason, of compassing and imagining the death of the King. It was, however, observed by the acute and solid commentator upon this charge, that the learned Judge * had

* *Vide the Charge*.—" If a conspiracy to depose or
 " to imprison the King, to get his person into the power
 " of the conspirators, or to procure an invasion of
 " the kingdom, involves in it the compassing and ima-
 " gining of his death; and if steps taken in prosecution
 " of such a conspiracy are rightly deemed overt acts of
 " the treason of imagining and compassing the King's
 " death; need I add, that if it should appear that it has
 " entered into the heart of any man, who is a subject
 " of this country, to design to overthrow the whole Go-
 " vernment of the country, to pull down and subvert
 " from its very foundations the British monarchy, that
 " glorious fabric which it has been the work of ages to
 " erect, maintain, and support; which has been ce-
 " mented with the best blood of our ancestors: to design
 " such

had “ presented us with a question, which
 “ is no doubt of the utmost magnitude and
 “ importance. Is the proceeding,” says he,
 “ thus described, matter of high treason, or
 “ is it not ? It confessedly does not come

“ such a horrible ruin and devastation, which no King
 “ could survive, a crime of such a magnitude, that no
 “ lawgiver in this country hath ever ventured to con-
 “ template in its whole extent ; need I add, I say, that
 “ the complication and the enormous extent of such a
 “ design will not prevent its being distinctly seen, that
 “ the compassing and imagining the death of the King
 “ is involved in it, is in truth of its very essence ?

“ This is too plain a case to require further illustra-
 “ tion from me. If any man of plain sense, but not
 “ conversant with subjects of this nature, should feel
 “ himself disposed to ask, whether a conspiracy of this
 “ nature is to be reached by this medium only ; whether
 “ it is a *specific* treason to compass and imagine the death
 “ of the King, and *not a specific* treason to conspire to
 “ subvert the monarchy itself ; I answer, that the statute
 “ of Edw. III. by which we are governed, hath not de-
 “ clared this (which, in all just theory of treason, is the
 “ greatest of all treasons) to be high treason.

“ I said no lawgiver had ever ventured to contem-
 “ plate it in its whole extent. The *Seditio Regni*,
 “ spoken of by some of our ancient writers, comes the
 “ nearest to it, but falls far short of it.”

“ within the remoter instances, upon which
 “ there have been adjudged cases.” And
 from the confessions and avowals of the
 Lord Chief Justice he drew this conclusion:
 “ Hence it follows, with the most irresistible
 “ evidence, that *that which the statute by*
 “ *which we are bound has not declared to be*
 “ *treason, that which no Lawyer has ever ven-*
 “ *tured to contemplate,* can never be construed
 “ into treason till all law is annihilated, and
 “ all maxims of jurisprudence are trampled
 “ under foot and despised.” The public
 will be for ever grateful to this learned and
 judicious critic for his naked exposition of
 a subject, which had been produced by the
 learned Judge in a very questionable form, un-
 der all the imposing pomp of official solemn-
 nity. “ The plain reason of all this is, that the
 “ Chief Justice suspected, that the treasons
 “ described in the stat. 25 Edw. III. or those
 “ founded upon precedents, or deducible
 “ from adjudged cases, even with the addi-
 “ tion of the Chief Justice’s new Construc-
 “ tive Treasons, founded, as he confesses,
 “ upon no law, precedent, or case, and
 “ which

“ which therefore is in reality no treason,
 “ did not afford sufficient ground of crimi-
 “ nation against the prisoners. He is there-
 “ fore obliged to leave the plain road, and
 “ travel out of the record. No law, no de-
 “ duction of law, that could be forced or
 “ drawn out of a mere view of the statute,
 “ would answer the purposes of the Special
 “ Commission.”

The first bill of indictment presented to
 the Grand Jury included twelve persons*,
 against all of whom they found a true bill.
 The Lord Chief Justice had said, in his
 charge, that high treason *was the greatest*
crime against faith, duty, and human society :
 consequently the persons guilty of it must be
 persons dangerous to the welfare of the so-
 ciety in which they move and act at large.
 Yet it is a singular circumstance, that, not-

* Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, John Augus-
 tus Bonney, Steward Kydd, Jeremiah Joyce, Thomas
 Wardle, Thomas Holcroft, John Richter, Matthew
 Moore, John Thelwall, Richard Hodgson, John Baxter.
 withstanding

withstanding the heinousness of the offence, and that his Majesty was especially empowered by the late statute suspending the operation of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, to secure and detain such persons, as he suspected were conspiring against his person and government, four of those against whom the bill was found were still permitted to be at large. Mr. Holcroft, one of them, some time after the bill had been found, resisted his friends' most urgent importunities and the fairest opportunity of making his escape. His conscious innocence brought him into court to make a voluntary surrender of his person, which was reluctantly accepted of by the court; so little dangerous in fact to the Government and Constitution were these State delinquents in the eyes of their very prosecutors! It is a circumstance big with portentous consequences, when high treason is trifled with, as if swords, racks and poison were introduced as playthings to a nursery. The Grand Jury afterwards found separate

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bills

bills against four other persons*, which were all the bills returned.

The feelings of the public mind were unusually engaged in the impending fate of the State prisoners. The emotions of those who reflected upon the subject were as uniformly opposite as the operations of the magnet. The weight of prejudice against them was in exact proportion to the credulity of the multitude duped into the belief of the Minister's assurances: insomuch that the papers in the pay of the Treasury seldom spoke of the prisoners but as guilty of high treason.

To solicit benefactions for the families of the unfortunate sufferers was holden out as an actual participation of their guilt. This was general manœuvring, which it was feared might lose its effect before the trials would commence. In order however to keep up a proper degree of fermentation

* James Martin, John Hillier, John Philip Frankloe, Thomas Spence.

in the public spirit, Le Maitre, Higgins, and Upton were frequently examined, and always remanded to prison for further examination *. To have declared this underplot a perjured piece of iniquity, would not have answered either the wish or the design of connecting it with the grand conspiracy to overturn the whole fabrick. The ingenuity however of the managers of this piece with respect to Robert Watt was admirable : having given a valuable consideration for the services of this ill-fated miscreant during his life, they held themselves entitled to draw every advantage out of him even after his death.

As the conviction of Watt seemed to have regulated the opening of the Special Commission, so the progress of that Commission appeared to have decided the period of his existence. He was executed in the direct mid-interval between the finding of the bills.

* They were said to have been committed upon a charge of High Treason, for being Members of the Corresponding Society.

by the Grand Jury and the commencement of the trials of the principal conspirators. Sufficient evidence had not come out at Watt's trial to connect his guilt with that of the twelve State prisoners against whom the indictment for the grand conspiracy had been found. As this hired blood-seeker was the dupe of his own avarice and deceit, so was he made the wanton sacrifice of the disappointments, errors and cruelty of his employers. It is a known fact, that their original design was to have first proceeded against Stoke, who was a Member of the Friends of the People, and had escaped: he was to have been tried, and would probably have been convicted upon the evidence of Robert Watt, who had actually informed, and was to have been admitted as King's evidence against him. This plan however failed, to the severe cost of the venal informer. The emotions of the people of Scotland upon his conviction, were upon experience not found very promising to the success of the ensuing scenes. The odious character of a spy, to seduce, entrap,

entrap, and then betray his fellow citizens, had stifled every sentiment of pity or expectancy to make his case common with that of others, who did not at least lie under this foulest stigma of degraded nature. It was now generally known, that Watt had solicited the men of Perth to give him an order for 4000 spears, which they declined, notwithstanding he had attempted to affix this charge upon them. The public was also daily more and more convinced, that Watt acted not from any sincerity in the cause of Reform, but that whatever he did himself, or prompted others to do in it, was with a prospect of converting it to the inhuman purposes of his base designs. With a view to them, he had ever refused to subscribe his name to any of the popular Societies, alleging, that the particular reasons which prevented him would proportionally augment his zeal in persuading others to enter amongst them.

What the conviction by a Scottish Jury could not accomplish, was attempted to be

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, effected

effected by the confession and last dying speech of the malefactor. Every affectation of sincerity and seriousness was lavished upon this coarse Grub-street stratagem, to delude the people into a belief, that this protomartyr to the popular cause was jointly implicated with the indicted prisoners in the Tower in the grand conspiracy to overturn the Government and Constitution. Immediately after his execution, was published BY AUTHORITY, *The Declaration and Confession of Robert Watt, written, subscribed, and delivered by himself the Evening before his Execution* * at Edinburgh, Oct. 15, 1794, attested by the Rev. Dr. Baird, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and the Rev. T. S. Jones, one of the Ministers of Lady Glenorchie's Chapel. The imposing air of truth attempted to be conveyed by announcing the attestation of two respectable divines, was an effort too contemptible to be spoken of. Their seeing and attesting a

* It was delivered in time to the Sheriff to have procured a respite, if not a pardon, had his employers thought he could have further served their ends.

writing

writing signed by Robert Watt of this purport, is highly probable : nor is it unlikely that the paper was really of Watt's writing : but it is evident as the sun in its meridian, that the greater part of it is a mass of falsity and deception, which probably was his last effort to escape the gallows, which his former villainies had now so nearly brought him to : he lost his life for his impotency to deceive and dissemble more than he already had.

An upright written confession on the awful and conscious verge of eternity, is a pledge of sincerity left by the departed to his surviving friends, that is seldom questioned, and never slighted. But when we find a person convicted of the highest civil crimes against his country, actuated by avarice, pride and malice to others ; practising deceit to ensnare the innocent, counterfeiting zeal to drive the hasty to extremities, and betraying by assumed cordiality the unwary and guileless ; attempting extortion upon his employers, and giving

false evidence against those, who had resisted his solicitations to evil, were truly subjects of much humiliation to a sincere and penitent christian. As much injury as had been done to others, so much forgiveness was to be entreated, and restitution made. In lieu of this, we find a dissertation upon the extraordinary graces conferred by God upon this faithful servant, his *devotional frame of mind*, and apostolical exertions in *establishing the worship of God in families who never had it before*. That it might not be all panegyric, he at last owns something about himself of human weakness. “ *These soul exercises less or more have continued with me, amidst grievous provocations and sore backslidings.*” He admits himself actuated by some vanity and ambition. When he began to think that his employers were serious in their intentions to sacrifice him to his own base arts and deceptions, he flew in this last resort to the extremity of his old practices. He had once failed in his attempt to extort a thousand pounds out of his plot-hunting paymasters ; but despaired not

not at present of their final indulgence and reward, if he could but acquire credit for the extension of the conspiracy throughout the British empire, as well as he had for its existence in Edinburgh. He full well knew the lustful cravings of his former employers after any information that would frighten the public at this particular time into a belief of the grand conspiracy. To keep up to the last a consistency with his former character, he risked his fate upon the most impudent and incredible of all discoveries. It was nothing to confess what he had been convicted of, viz. that with forty-seven spears and six men he had taken some steps towards seizing the Castle of Edinburgh, the Justices and Magistrates, and overturning the government of North Britain. Now, for the good of the nation, he discloses what had escaped the discovering furor of our inventive Cabinet, eluded the covetous zeal of each mercenary Argus, and even baffled the busy patriotism of Mr. Reeves's two thousand associations. He had brought matters to such maturity, that
there

there remained almost nothing to do for the execution of the whole, but a visit to England by intelligent and confidential persons. The first movement was intended to be made in Edinburgh, London and Dublin, while every town throughout the kingdoms was in readiness to act according to the plan, on the very first notice, which was to be given by couriers dispatched by express.

When we cast our eyes upon the measures adopted by Administration within these last two years, to acquire information of real, or to collect tales of imaginary plots and conspiracies ; when we pass in review the herds of spies and informers which have infested the three kingdoms within that period ; when we reckon up the numbers of arrests and examinations public and private ; when we peruse the trials of those prosecuted for State offences, and reflect upon the mass of evidence, the combination of talent and influence employed at the bar, and the unprecedented number of witnesses and cart loads of written evidence brought
against

against them ; and then reflect, that not one solitary individual could be produced from Edinburgh, London, or Dublin, or any one of the many towns within the three kingdoms, who was implicated in, or in any manner acquainted with the plan of this magical conspirator Robert Watt, who at this moment had his associates, accomplices, agents and dependents ready at command in every town throughout Great Britain and Ireland, *for* overturning the Government and Constitution ; I know not whether most to condemn the folly or execrate the wickedness of those, who could pretend *by authority* to circulate such glaring, scandalous and pernicious falsehoods.

Such were the efforts used by the instigators and managers of this State prosecution to ensure its success. Happily for British liberty, the issue depended not upon their influence. Singular also were some measures, which about this time they had adopted to forward the *real* object of the War. His Majesty having been enabled

abled by Parliament to enlist for soldiers, and grant commissions or letters of service to any persons, who formerly were subjects to the late King of France ; an immense number of emigrants were taken into immediate pay, sufficient to have officered an army of 30,000 men, had soldiers been found to fill up the ranks. But from what country they were to be raised was not yet determined. No Sovereign of any European State at war could engage their own subjects to enlist, as they were wanted, under their own banners : the neutral Powers objected to the recruiting service : and it would not much forward the restoration of monarchy to decoy away the Royalists, or Chouans as they were now called, in case the transportation of them from the Vendée could be effected. Whatever turn the affairs of France may take, short of the return of her ancient monarchy, the fugitive Nobles, who have accepted of this pay, though it may be to them an honourable yet slender subsistence in extreme penury, have probably fastened themselves as pensioners for

for life upon the benevolence of our Government; the Act indeed particularly precludes them from half-pay. Although every man cannot commend the original cause, motives, or pretexts for the emigration of these unfortunate men, yet no one can refuse compassion to the measure of their present wretchedness. This expenditure of Great Britain will produce a certain benefit to some individuals, and is not therefore to be lamented like those enormous sums which have occasioned bloodshed or rewarded perfidy.

Another most extraordinary measure about this time was adopted by our Cabinet, which, with reference to the existing circumstances of the British empire, is perhaps the most unaccountable of the many inconsistencies which have characterized their entire system. It is well known, that the only body of men in Europe, who professedly avowed and acted up to the principles of pure Jacobitism, were those British subjects, who, denying the right of the present family to the
Throne

Throne of Great Britian, enlisted in the Irish Brigade in France, and received pay from the French King as subsidised troops of the head of the Stuart family, whom they formally acknowledged as their Sovereign. They had continued incorporated since the æra of our Revolution ; and have been ever signalized in the eyes of all Europe for their intrepidity, spirit and conduct. Unlike so many temporising shifters of the present day, they were ever ready to seal their principles with their blood. Their firmness to their cause was truly enviable. *Talis cum sis, utinam noster esses*, was an honourable sentiment, if felt by our Ministers : but even that would not have justified their acting upon it as they did. Spirited, valiant and experienced officers cannot be too highly appraised. Although these men had hitherto professed political principles incompatible with the allegiance of a British subject, and still practised a religion different from that established by law in England, why not afford them the opportunity of swearing allegiance to the Sovereign •they were now willing

willing to fight for? why not unshackle them of the shameful fetters that prevent a Catholic arm from being raised in the service of a Protestant empire? Never surely did so favourable an opportunity present itself of annihilating the base relics of bigotry and persecution. Policy and interest now pressed what reason had long called for, the united efforts of all true Britons in the active support of the common interest of their country. But, alas! the views of our present Cabinet were great and unbounded only in averring conspiracies where none existed; in making levies and exposing them to ineffectual services; in forming treaties and paying subsidies to encourage perfidy and induce disgrace upon ourselves. False, narrow, and base-hearted wherever they could contribute to the liberty or happiness of the subject! Instead of opening the service to the millions of his Majesty's subjects, who profess the Catholic religion throughout the empire, they continue to add delusive prospects to violated promises, and still swindle thousands into the service under

under the enormous severities and degrading humiliations of the Test Law. By way of a fresh decoy to the Irish Catholics, they revive five regiments of the Irish Brigade of two battalions each, and send over their Commanders to that kingdom to recruit none but Catholics, to whom they promise the free exercise of their religion, and the constant opportunity of attending the divine service performed by chaplains of their own persuasion, instead of being caned to a worship in which they could not conscientiously join. It is however to be remarked, that all the commissions in these revived corps are to be given to the officers of the old Irish Brigade; and if a sufficient number of them cannot be found, they are to be completed by English or Irish Catholics only. British subjects who engage in the military service of their country, naturally reflect upon the situation they are to be reduced to at the termination of the war, should they fortunately survive its calamities. No certainty can in fact be given to them for their being continued on the

British Establishment ; for who is the Minister that will ensure the enjoyment of place, pension, or salary to those, whom a statute renders incapable of holding them ? We have indeed seen the promises of Ministers to procure the repeal of these statutes solemnly made by the servants of the Crown in one Parliament, and obstinately and imperiously broken through in the face of another*.

The Duke of Portland, in the primitive fervour of his new-born zeal for Toryism, wished to manifest the sincerity of his conversion by the multitude of proselytes he could gain over to his new doctrines. It is difficult to say, how far he judged of the sincerity of other converts by that of his own change. He seems, by his conduct on the present occasion, to have allowed to others a very large retention of their old principles.

* The refusal to open the army by the removal of the Test Law in the British Parliament, after Lord Fitzgibbon and Lord Hobart had pledged themselves to the Irish Parliament for its being done in two months.

In order to encourage the recruiting and immediate incorporation of these new corps of Roman Catholics, to whom he could promise no prospect of reward on the British Establishment, he wrote a most polite and flattering letter to a gentleman who had the command of one of the regiments, assuring him, that, if by a fortunate turn of events the French monarchy should be restored, either during or after the present war, and their attachment to their former master should call upon their gratitude for past favours, they should be considered at full liberty to array themselves again under their former standards. Can there be a more flattering and honourable reward to the long-tried loyalty of the Irish nation to the reigning family of our beloved Sovereign, than to invite them to risk their lives in a calamitous war, under penalties and disabilities, from which he cannot dispense them, and soothe them with the flattering prospect of retiring into the service and pay of the French Monarch, for the avowed purpose of supporting the claims of the Family of Stuart

Stuart against his Majesty, to whom they have sworn and proved their allegiance?

The exertions of the British Cabinet conducted as little to the success of our arms on the Continent, as the additional power and prerogative given to the Stadtholder by the States of Holland. That country began to despair of the protection either of the British or Austrian arms; and inundation seemed now the only security against the impetuosity and numbers of their invaders. The swelling of the rivers by the autumnal rains favoured much this mode of defence, and promised success from the opening of the sluices, which upon experiments in the late summer had been found generally to fail. A very powerful party in that country was known to be averse from the measure of inundation, as well as many other measures of the Court party. Fearing therefore that opposition might be effectually made against this plan, if it should be debated or attempted, the party of the Stadtholder procured an Act of the States to be passed,

by which he was invested with almost dictatorial powers of providing for the safety of the republic. He could not however succeed in making the country rise *en masse*, nor dared he to attempt to drown them by opening the sluices. The province of Zealand, foreseeing the dangerous consequences of persisting in the war, proposed to the States-General to negotiate for peace. They were too generally influenced by the Stadtholder, and he too powerfully guided by the warlike councils of the British cabinet, to listen to so prudent a proposal.

The success of the French was every where uninterrupted excepting at Bois-le-Duc, where the inundation arose to about four feet for five or six miles round the town. The French abandoned it, and left several of their cannon in the water. Soon after this however the inhabitants rose and refused to submit to the horrors of a siege; and when the waters were let off, they obliged the Governor to surrender the town without firing a shot.

General

General Clairfait was again defeated in a general engagement, with immense loss of men, ammunition and baggage ; and he was forced to cross the Rhine with the utmost expedition and in great confusion. The enemy pressed so close upon him, that he had not the opportunity of collecting his broken and dispersed troops till he had crossed that river. It was found advisable, whilst the British army was encamped under the walls of Nimeguen, to send the heavy baggage and artillery across the Waal to Arnheim on the Rhine. It was intended to make a vigorous stand in the island of Bommel-Waart, which is reckoned one of the strongest positions in Holland. It was so well fortified with batteries and redoubts, and so amply supplied with troops, as to bear the appearance of a regular fortress.

In an attack which the enemy made upon the advanced posts of the Duke of York's army, the 37th regiment was surprised and almost entirely cut to pieces. Major Hope and about 50 men only escaped. About

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30,000

30,000 of the enemy crossed the Waal, according to the Duke's account, and another very considerable body of them at the same time crossed the Meuse between Ruremonde and Venlo, who had already taken possession of Cleves.

The Hollanders, finding how ineffectual their resistance was against the French, and sensible of the dangers and miseries, to which the prolongation of the war would expose their country, used every argument with our Ministers to enforce the necessity of negotiating a peace. Our Cabinet, which had originally involved them in the war against their inclination, was not very likely to accede to any proposal for terminating it on account of their reluctance to carry it on. Peace would by no means suit the present operations and views of the British Cabinet. Though their foreign projects on the Continent seemed to have unexceptionably failed in every particular, yet the fate of the grand internal manœuvre of proving the existence of the conspiracy was still depend-

ing; and no measure of their general system was to be abandoned, until the success of this prime movement was ensured. The Hollanders however placed their safety and interest in different objects from those which directed the councils of the British Cabinet; they now gave open warning, that they should take the liberty of treating separately for themselves, which from this time they appeared to have attempted. Their movements however both in peace and war are usually tardy.

Such was the foresight of the Hollanders with respect to the ultimate issue of the invasion of their country, such their horror of the fatal politics, by which we had forced them into this calamitous warfare, that the mercantile body of that nation, unable to resist the influence of the Court party, which was deaf to negotiation, sent, as the last resource in their desperate position, a deputation to our Minister to entreat leave to deposit their treasures and stores in England without paying the duties *ad valorem* at our

custom-house. The answer of Mr. Pitt to the Committee of Merchants, who came upon this deputation, was in perfect unison with his usual disdainful haughtiness. He would not consent to relax the revenue laws in this instance, because that would tend to create diffidence and mistrust in the measures of the Cabinet, and virtually hold out the defence of Holland as visionary and chimerical. And as we would listen to no remonstrances, when we first forced the Dutch into this fatal and ruinous contest, so were we equally deaf to all entreaties to help them out of the gulf into which we had plunged them. Our Ambassador at the Hague was charged to declare officially, "that his Majesty, far from being disposed
 "to assist or facilitate any such emigration,
 "wishes to check and discourage it as much
 "as possible, considering it as highly prejudicial to the interests of the republic and
 "the common cause." If Holland shall survive the shock and retain her sovereignty, she will undoubtedly prove grateful to our country for taking her interests so effectually

tually under our protection. But it was an unexceptionable rule with the Minister to make every non-approver of his measures, whether Dutch or British, severely feel the effects of their audacious temerity.

CHAPTER XI.

 NOVEMBER.

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IF in human events there be a sure criterion of the fall of a great Nation, it is when the failures, disasters, and mismanagement of a weak and desperate Administration are submitted to with torpid indifference. The progress from this state to extreme calamity is rapid and violent. If in the critical moment of the catastrophe she can command sufficient energy to recover herself from the shock, it is a fortunate hazard out of human reason or expectation. The rapid and amazing successes of the French in every quarter of the globe were received and retailed in this country with as much apathy, as if they affected neither directly nor indirectly the interests of Great Britain. The attentions and feelings of the Nation seemed alive only to an anxiety bordering upon avidity for the conviction and punishment of the indicted prisoners. Every hour was now pregnant with fresh proofs, that this fatal war had been solely undertaken to op-
pose

pose and weaken the democratic parts of our Constitution, by preventing that fair representation of the People in Parliament, which the Constitution requires. The Legislature, the Cabinet, the Pulpit, the Bench, all combined to resist the call for reform. *It is matter of public notoriety, that there have been associations formed in this country and in other parts of this kingdom, the professed purpose of which has been a change in the Constitution of the Commons House of Parliament.* So spoke the Lord President of the Special Commission in his Charge to the Grand Jury. With more truth would he have said, that their professed purpose was to *assert* the Constitution of the Commons House in Parliament. The Constitution of the Commons House of Parliament is, properly speaking, the democratic part of the British Constitution ; and it consists in the free deputations or powers of attorney, by which the people of Great Britain elect, depute and empower certain individuals from amongst themselves to become the legal organs and instruments of their free will and action. That only
can

can be a change in our Constitution, which *otherwise* sends or nominates Members to this popular Assembly. It is a dangerous insult to tell the people, that they shall not be allowed this first right of the Constitution, the free choice and deputation of their own Attornies, either because they never have hitherto exercised, or for a long time have ceased to exercise it. It is a right inherent in the people, inalienable by the people: it can be weakened by no suspension, effaced by no time. Who in fact are so hostile to the Constitution of their country, as those who advise and support the nomination and continuance of such Attornies, Agents, or Stewards to the people, who acquire their appointments by unfairness or corruption, who are not even named by their principals, who act not by their direction, nor for their benefit? Every effort to support this palpable deviation from the Constitution is so dangerous to the State, that Mr. Locke makes it even amount to a dissolution of the Government.

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The Nation at this time was divided into three parties, which I shall not attempt to distinguish by any name or appellation. Such is the present perversion of terms! One party is wholly guided by Ministers: they are still by far the most numerous, and their desperate violence is likely to drive the people into the extreme excess of that very democracy which they professedly combat. Another party consists of real Republicans, who wish for a change in the Constitution; they are not numerous, and at present shew no violence; they rest upon their arms, whilst the first party are doing their work. Every thing that tends to aggrrieve, distress and irritate the people, forwards their grand object, which is to create a real discontent. They only wait for this critical moment to withdraw the affections of the multitude from that Constitution, by the abuses of which they have so severely suffered. To these every national calamity is a consolation, every abuse a rejoicing, every burthen a satisfaction, every disaster a trophy,

trophy, every defeat a triumph. Had they, after Lord Mansfield's suggestion, spent millions in hiring Agents to overturn this Government, they would have drained the richest treasury in Europe; ere they had found out of our Cabinet such efficient engines for their purposes. The third party consists of those who possess a thorough, clear and practical knowledge of the importance and necessity of the fundamental democratical power of the Constitution, who foresee in the weakening of that power the danger, in the crushing of it the absolute overthrow of the Constitution itself. They are the men of sincerity and truth, who at all times opposed the systematical corruption of Ministers from a real conviction of the dangers, to which it exposed the existence of the Constitution. Their numbers were once filled up by the addition of many men of birth, talents and opulence, whom chance, disappointments, or connections had separated from the Ministers of the day, and who therefore continued to oppose them whilst they enjoyed a prospect of turning upon them and the
people

people the same engines of corruption with double force. The craft however of the present possessors had so multiplied and sharpened these deadly weapons, as to parry all the efforts of their rivals to disarm them. Wearied out by fruitless assaults, and now despairing of their principal object, first in detached parties, then in a mass they went over to the enemy, and with uncommon fury assailed the virtue of those, who still stood undaunted and resistless in the cause of freedom. The most abandoned of mankind is the unveiled hypocrite. For the real and substantial welfare of the people there could not have been a more seasonable and complete defecation of the Whig Party. Not one foul particle or dreg left to defile or vitiate the sublimated æther of their genuine patriotism. From the moment that the fascinating lures of ambition and avarice became evanescent from their views, from that instant they dropped the false colours of popularity, under which they had so long deceived, and forgot every other contest, than that by which they could secure the

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largest

largest share in the spoils, for which alone they had uniformly struggled. Base recreant apostates from the cause of the people ! the very last glowing spark of their liberty shall stigmatize your wicked efforts to yoke them down to servitude. Through the lustful vigour of youth you forced an artificial continency, which upon the verge of age and impotency you abandoned to the vilest prostitution !

We are at length arrived at the critical moment for opening the grand masked batteries against those, who by delusion, treachery, or violence had been betrayed or driven within the bearing of their ordnance. The meeting of the Parliament had been fixed for the present month ; and although the Minister had been so indecently precipitate, as to bring forward a Bill, which asserted the existence of the conspiracy, even before he condescended to submit to the Select Committee the investigation of the proofs of that assertion ; yet was he pre-

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vented

vented by the less daring effrontery of some of his colleagues from facing them, till he had fully substantiated the fact, which by his manœuvres they had pledged their faith to prove to the public. The most determined Jacobin could scarcely have culled out of the indefinite possibility of occurrences, a case so big with evil, as in the present moment to commit the veracity and justice of the legislative body to the legal adjudication of their constituents : this was the fact in the trials of Messrs. Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall. In the paroxysm of national alarm, whether it had been excited by the folly or designs of the Minister, reason, policy and decency could have suggested no other ground for passing so extraordinary an Act, than an apparent disposition or tendency in some persons to sedition or treason, by which the nation was thrown into alarm, disquiet and confusion. Upon such a ground of presumption, the most rigorous and summary measures would have been justified, to bring the suspected persons
to

to trial before the tribunal of their country, which alone could judge of the reality of the danger. Sir John Mitford, in the trial of Hardy, said, what is notoriously true and pointedly relevant to the case in question :

“ Trial by jury is not only the great protection of the State, and of every individual who lives under it, but that control over the administration of justice by the executive power, which the people have kept in their own hands, that which the tyranny of Cromwell could not subdue, and which was the first to shake James II. on his throne. *In ordinary cases the State might be in no danger from a verdict, in some cases it might.*” He

must be an inventive theorist, who can state a case, in which a verdict can more effectually endanger the State, than that verdict, which directly impeaches the veracity and justice of the legislative and executive powers by solemnly acquitting, where they had solemnly condemned. The Attorney General in his reply upon the trial of Mr. Tooke was fully aware of the effects of this preju-

dication of the case : “ No consideration on
 “ earth, said he, should have prevailed upon
 “ me to be the instrument of this prosecution,
 “ unless its justice and propriety had
 “ been clearly obvious. In addition to my
 “ private opinion, you will recollect, that
 “ Parliament, the Privy Council, and a
 “ Grand Jury, have given their sanction
 “ to the final enquiry in which it is now
 “ placed : Parliament and the Council, I
 “ know, may be swayed by motives of pre-
 “ caution, and the *ex parte* evidence before
 “ a Grand Jury is not conclusive. In ad-
 “ dition to their presumption, positive and
 “ direct proof must be given, such as will
 “ satisfy your minds beyond a doubt of
 “ the individual guilt of the prisoner : with-
 “ out this, I can have no claim on your
 “ verdict.”

So important and so sacred to English-
 men are the rights of Juries, that to attempt
 to give a curtailed and partial account of
 these late trials, might take off a part of
 that sacred deference, which the country
 owes

owes to the late verdicts. In Parliament we have been shocked at the unaccountable assertion of a Law Officer of the Crown, who conducted the prosecutions: That if the Jury had known as much of the conspiracy as he had, their verdicts would not have acquitted one of the prisoners; an evident avowal this of misprision of treason, on the part of him who suppressed the knowledge of it from those, who were so transcendently entitled to the full disclosure of the whole. It had seemingly become a test, which the Minister demanded of his sworn adherents, that they should in the face of Parliament criminate the acquitted prisoners, vilify the trials, or deny the justice of the verdicts under the late Special Commission. There could not be a more mischievous practice, than to encourage such judgments and assertions from partial statements and representations of the cases, in contradiction to the sense of upright Juries, who had attended to the whole evidence and arguments upon them.

There is a laudable jealousy, with which all State prosecutions ought to be viewed in a free country ; but the present *trials* were conducted in such a manner, that would have provoked suspicion even under the Divan. A royal proclamation and legislative declaration of the existing guilt : the prosecutors possessing all the means, evidence and persons for substantiating the fact which they required : the spirit and almost enthusiasm of the Ministerial party anticipating the guilt of the prisoners : the Counsel for the prosecution numerous beyond precedent ; the mass of written evidence unparalleled ; the number of witnesses unexampled*.

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* Without attempting to give to the reader any idea of the resistless torrent of eloquence and reasoning, with which Mr. Erskine defended his clients ; for the mere elucidation of these historical annals, I shall quote his words as I find them reported, to shew the intention and spirit, and the actual influence of power, under which these prosecutions were commenced and carried on. In opening his defence upon the trial of
Mr.

The opening of the cause on the first of the trials took up nine hours. In order to preserve

Mr. H. Tooke, he said, with reference to that of Mr. Hardy who had been acquitted: "I stood here as
" Counsel for a lowly, obscure mechanic, known only
" to persons obscure like himself, and I had to contend
" with what no man in England ever before had to
" contend with; I had to contend, in the first place,
" with the vast and extensive authority and influence
" of the Crown of England: I will not, after the late
" verdict, call it the crushing authority.

"I had to contend against the dear, just, and natural
" interest which the subjects of this country must
" and ought to have in the preservation of the Chief
" Magistrate, appointed to execute the laws.

"I had to struggle with the more generous and benevolent interest, characteristic of Englishmen,
" for the life of the Prince, to whom no personal blame
" is imputable, and who suffers more than any of his
" subjects from the enormous abuses in the Government.

"I had to struggle with this under circumstances peculiarly adverse; under an alarm propagated in part
" by honest zeal and enthusiasm against the Societies,
" whose acts I am defending, but propagated under the
" detestable domineer of the lowest and blackest hypocrisy, which ever degraded the human character;

preserve the appearance of candour and fairness, the Counsel for the prisoners were admitted

“ the community being partly bribed, partly tempted,
 “ and partly duped, to decry what had been formerly
 “ upheld as meritorious.

“ I had to fight with this, not in the face of an enlightened people in an ordinary season, but at a time
 “ when the face of the earth was drawn into convulsions, when mighty revolutions were shaking the
 “ earth, when bad men were trembling for what ought
 “ to follow, and good men for what ought not ; when
 “ all the name of man, as having any political rights,
 “ was a supposed dagger at the throat ; when all the
 “ principles of our free Constitution, under the impulse
 “ of a delusive or wickedly-infused terror, seemed to
 “ be trampled under foot.

“ But under all this pressure, I could have looked up
 “ for protection, under other circumstances : I could,
 “ as representing one of the People in a fearful extremity, have looked up to the Representatives of the
 “ People ; to that mighty tribunal above all law, and
 “ the parent of all the protections which the law affords
 “ to the subject ; I could have looked up to the Commons of England, to hold up its shield before the
 “ Subject against the Crown.

“ But in this case, that shield of the Subject, I found
 “ a sharp and destroying sword in the hand of the enemy : the protecting Commons was itself, by corruption
 “ and

admitted for one short hour only to look
over the enormous mass of written evidence,
which

“ and infatuation, the accuser : instead of standing up
“ for the Subject, it acted as an Old Bailey Solicitor, to
“ prepare the briefs for the Crown. The whole cause
“ had been read from the Reports of the Commons; no
“ original labours of theirs, but collected from the files
“ of newspapers, which every man had seen in every
“ coffee-house for years together; I had therefore to
“ contend against an impeachment without the justice
“ of such a proceeding. When a man, though a com-
“ moner, is impeached, he is sent before the Lords for
“ trial, as a privilege, because all the Commons are in
“ law supposed to be pledged by the accusation of their
“ representatives.

“ The Lords, therefore, as being a balance against
“ the Commons, is the refuge of an Englishman so im-
“ peached.

“ But for this poor man there was no refuge : the
“ Lords themselves were joint accusers ; private Lords
“ in office prejudged the cause, and insolently dictated
“ what judgments Judges ought to give, and Juries to
“ pronounce. I had, besides all this, to contend with
“ an army of the most learned men in the profession,
“ with all the weight and trappings of station.

“ I had to wade through matter, which not only no
“ mind can investigate, or bodily strength support to
“ state,

which could not be completely read in a week. Mr. Hardy's trial lasted the uncommon length of eight days; that of Mr. Horne Tooke six days; and that of Mr. Thelwall five. If it be allowable to judge of the impression which the verdicts of acquittal operated upon the Judges who tried the prisoners, from what they expressed in Court; the levity, contempt and censure, with which they have since been treated in the House of Commons, were little congenial with the sentiments of the Bench. The Lord Chief Justice Eyre, in summing up the evidence upon the close of Mr. Hardy's trial, told the Jury, what was equally applicable to all the trials, and ought to regulate the sentiments of the Nation upon the effect and result of these verdicts, "It must be a satisfaction to the mind of every

"state, but to the utter disgrace and extinction of English criminal justice, which no porter could carry on his shoulders.

"I had to contend with a case which the Judges declared to be so new, that they were obliged to try experiments upon the legal Constitution to find a way of trying it."

"honest

“ honest man, that this cause has been hap-
 “ pily so conducted, and has been proceed-
 “ ed upon with so much patience and tem-
 “ per, as that your minds may have been suf-
 “ ficiently *informed on the subject to enable*
 “ *you to discover its* true merits, and to pro-
 “ nounce a verdict, which in the first place
 “ will be satisfactory to your own minds, and,
 “ being satisfactory to your own minds, can-
 “ not but be satisfactory to your country.”

When two of these prisoners had gone
 through their trials, and been acquitted by
 the verdict of their country ; Ministers now
 saw, that the only effectual check to the
 success of their manœuvres was the incor-
 ruptible firmness of an English Jury. There
 were still confined several other prisoners,
 against whom bills of indictment had been
 found, for being concerned in the general
 conspiracy. Having failed in their first at-
 tempts, they despaired of succeeding better
 with others, against whom they had no
 more to charge. They accordingly acquit-
 ted the rest of the prisoners without bring-
 ing

ing any evidence against them ; and when they were brought to the bar, one of them, Mr. Holcroft, attempted to make an Address to the Court and the Jury, but was not permitted to do it by the Lord President, who assured him, that he had been dealt with most honourably, and had suffered neither hardship nor injustice *. The severity of close imprisonment, the anxiety under a commitment for the highest of all civil crimes, and the deprivation of the comforts and advantages of society are evidently *hardships* ; but how far they are unjust, can only be determined by the grounds of evidence, upon which the prisoner was charged and committed. If his prosecutors, without any pretence of error or mistake, without any fresh discovery, or any degree of exculpation, find it expedient under such an alarm of danger to acquit him without trial ; it is undeniable, that even in their

* This refusal to permit Mr. Holcroft to deliver his sentiments in Court, has given occasion to a very interesting, instructive and eloquent publication by this Gentleman, of a Narrative relating to his Prosecution for High Treason.

eyes he is not guilty ; and it is not to be questioned, whether it be unjust to oppress an innocent man upon such slight evidence, that cannot even induce his prosecutors to bring him forward to trial. Government had now brought to trial two of the conspirators, whom they thought most guilty. They had been acquitted : and it began to appear advisable to prosecute no more *. After so much avidity to criminate, their desisting to prosecute bespoke to demonstration the conviction that no conspiracy existed ; unless it can be proved, that treason may exist without a traitor, a conspiracy without conspirators.

Without entering into a detail or even general report of the trials, that ended so gloriously for the liberties of our country, it is impossible to forego some obvious reflections, that force themselves upon the

* It is credibly asserted, that about two hundred warrants were ready made out to serve upon different Members of the popular Societies, in case Hardy had been found guilty.

mind on this occasion. Mr. Hardy had been brought forward as the most active and ostensible of the conspirators, and been acquitted. Mr. Horne Tooke had been represented to the Jury as the subtle and cautious contriver and instigator of the conspiracy, and he also had been acquitted. This grand and favourite object of the Cabinet was not to be abandoned, but under the most reluctant necessity. Their last desperate effort was to be made against some one of the prisoners, whose case could be discriminated from that of the two former. They selected Mr. Thelwall; and ten days after the acquittal of Mr. Horne Tooke, which was the day upon which the trial of Mr. Thelwall commenced, four of the prisoners comprized in the same indictment with himself, for being complicated with him in one conspiracy, were acquitted and discharged in open Court. It was natural to suppose from this critically timed acquittal, that the case of Mr. Thelwall, upon which they were then about to proceed, involved in it some peculiar criminality, which at-

tached not to those whom they had acquitted without trial. The impression of such a difference might have worked upon the public, the Court and the Jury much prejudice against the prisoner ; but the integrity of the Court and Jury was proof against all attempts of artifice or bias. The public mind was kept in a stronger agitation for the fate of Mr. Thelwall, from a conviction that more positive evidence was to be brought against him, than any of the former prisoners. Their transports therefore upon his acquittal were proportionably the more violent.

It is to be recorded to the latest posterity, that in this State prosecution, out of the forty thousand members of the popular societies, out of the many thousand indiscriminate attendants upon Mr. Thelwall's Lectures, out of the million who inhabit the metropolis, not one solitary witness was produced to give evidence in support of the charges against the conspirators, but the hired and suspicious spies of Government, whose evidence could not
be

be received in Court without great reserve and allowance. One of these perjured hirelings (John Taylor) outshines all his peers, and reflects the highest honour and credit upon his virtuous employers. This immaculate agent of the Treasury had been so prominently zealous in his missionary functions, as to have composed a regular diary of his attendances and observations upon the meetings of the advocates for Parliamentary Reform. The narrow limits of these short annals, which allow no scope for biography, oblige me to omit the multifarious changes in name, form, and situation of this favourite and faithful *Proteus*. One prominent feature in his life will prove how acceptable to Ministers, and how serviceable to the country, were the virtuous labours and civism of this champion of the Constitution. So lately as on the 15th of the preceding month had he been convicted of bigamy : a crime which involved him in direct perjury, by having falsely sworn that he was a single man, when he attempted to marry a second woman. For this felony he was committed to prison for one

one fortnight, and fined in the enormous sum of one shilling. His confinement exactly expired on the day before Mr. Thelwall's trial commenced, which was on the first of December. Strange though instructive are such coincidences. The Keeper of Newgate had orders to distinguish this gentleman from the common felons, and he was accordingly boarded and lodged in Mr. Kirby's own house during his expiatory confinement. His testimony was objected to by the Counsel for the prisoner: but upon his conviction having been read in Court, and his discharge from prison proved by one of the officers of Newgate, he was declared *novus homo*, deserving of credit, and permitted to give evidence against the life of his fellow subject.

When in the Minister's failure of this deep laid plan, to criminate and punish as traitors the advocates for Parliamentary Reform, we contemplate the revival of expiring freedom, we behold with sympathetic raptures the stupendous exertions of Messrs.

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Erskine

Erskine and Gibbs in this glorious cause. The noble stand which they made against a host of Crown Lawyers, the difficulties which they surmounted, and the labours they underwent in the arduous and honourable struggle, will teach generations yet unborn to list the venerable names of *Erskine* and *Gibbs* as they imbibe in early infancy a love and reverence for the trial by Jury.

So extensive was this plan of the Ministers, that in Ireland similar efforts were attempted to criminate the proprietors of the *Northern Star*, a patriotic News-paper, chiefly circulated through the northern counties of that kingdom. An information had been filed against them for publishing the Address of the Society of United Irishmen to the Volunteers of Ireland. This information was brought forward at this particular time, in hopes that by the close of this year every part of the British Empire would be brought by legal means under the pressure and torture of State Prosecutions. It argues extraordinary loyalty and good
conduct

conduct in the Irish Nation, that since this publication, which was in December 1792, the Law Officers of the Crown could bring forward no stronger symptoms of guilt to try the effects of this grand experiment upon. It is also to be remarked, that this very address had been copied into the Northern Star out of a Government Paper called the *Belfast News-Letter*, and no prosecution had ever been commenced against the proprietors or publishers of the latter paper. After a trial of a whole day, the Jury brought in their verdict NOT GUILTY. Thus within the ramparts of *fair Trial* by Jury stood securely entrenched the rights and liberties of the People, against the powerful and destructive engines of State Prosecutions.

To keep alive the internal alarms either of domestic insurrection or foreign invasion, was still part of the plan. Idly did Ministers presume, that an uniform and musquet would engage individuals as effectually in the adoption of his measures, as in the

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military

military service of their Sovereign. With the new levies that were now ordered to be raised, the armed force of the realm would amount to the alarming number of 500,000 men :—an army in proportion to the population of France equal to a million and a half. Whether these actual requisitions, under the delusive terms of voluntary levies, be as requisite to support the British Constitution, as to establish a new form of Government in France, can be known only to those, who reflect without prejudice upon the past, view steadily the present, and look coolly into the future operations of the war.

It was no longer found advisable to make a stand at Nimeguen. Some few days before the evacuation of it, our troops made a very spirited sally from the town, which answered no other end, than to sacrifice several hundreds of our brave soldiers. By some mismanagement they were broken into parties, and by their eagerness to pursue the enemy in the dark were unwarily drawn under their batteries, from which they suffered
very

very severely. Scarcely had our men returned into the town, when the French recommenced their fire with redoubled ardour from the very works, which they had sallied out to destroy. Accounts vary as to our loss in the general retreat. It is however certain that many lives were lost in the town, in the most inglorious contest in which British soldiers were ever engaged. Some of the British troops, when the resolution of evacuating the town was known, began to plunder the houses of the inhabitants: they resisted, and called the Dutch troops to their assistance; and it is reported that in this conflict for plundering our allies, upwards of one hundred lives were lost. It is scarcely credible, that our troops should have rendered themselves so terrible to the people they were sent to defend: they were generally called the *Common Enemy*; and the States of Guelderland presented a formal complaint to the States General upon the subject, which was transmitted over to our Ministers. Yet is it not to be imagined that this conduct of our men, though unjustifi-

able, was unprovoked on the part of the Hollanders. Their treatment of all the troops in British pay was that of enemies, not of allies. The aversion of the Dutch Nation from the war was fully known from the beginning of it; the consequences therefore of forcing them into it were sufficiently clear to bring the responsibility of them home to the advisers. The Duke of Brunswick, it was said, was strongly urged to take upon himself the defence of Holland: he came as far as Arnheim, whither his Royal Highness had retreated; but upon seeing the real situation and disposition of the country he quickly returned to Germany. Immediately upon the Duke's return, Lord Malmesbury arrived with the more pleasing Commission under the Great Seal of England, to conclude and sign the treaty of marriage between the Prince of Wales and his Highness's daughter the Princess Carolina Amelia Elizabeth.

Every measure adopted in Holland, bespoke the immediate and necessary abandonment

ment of it by the British. Its fate was precipitated by the folly of one party, as much as it was forwarded by the exertions of the other. In Amsterdam the Citizens and Burghers were disarmed, every political publication prohibited, every popular meeting declared criminal, and many staunch friends to the people and the original constitutional rights of the Dutch Republic were committed to gaol. The States of Friesland on the other hand declared openly, what many others privately and strongly felt, that it was the interest of the Dutch Republic to negotiate with France, break off their alliance with Prussia and England, and sacrifice the private interests of the Family of Orange to the public welfare and interests of the States General.

Successes every where attended the exertions of the French. Maestricht surrendered; Coblentz on the Rhine had been taken possession of, though Mentz still held out. In Spain the Government had in vain attempted to raise the people of Biscay and Navarre

in a mass; and the Spanish army received so complete a defeat near Pampeluna, as to throw the whole kingdom into the utmost consternation.—Above three score vessels were taken by the French during this month, notwithstanding our boasted superiority at sea.

CHAPTER XII.

DECEMBER.

CONTENTS.

*Dangerous Consequences of the present Measures—All the Belligerent Powers except England inclined to Peace—Duke of York resigns—New Cabinet Arrangements—The Reward of Lord Mansfield's signal Services—Irish Parliament prorogued—The Portlandists' Agreement with Mr. Pitt for the Emancipation of Ireland—How far Ireland bound by the Councils of the British Cabinet—Mr. Pitt negotiates a Loan of 24,000,000*l.* before the Meeting of Parliament—6,000,000*l.* of it for the Emperor—Extinction of the Jacobin Club at Paris—Decree for sending young Capet out of the Kingdom—La Croix arrested for writing in Favour of Royalty—Recapture of Guadaloupe—French Successes in Spain—State of that Kingdom—Partiality of the French to the Dutch Nation—Stand made by the Combined Armies at Mentz—Manheim threatened—Fort du Rhin surrendered to the French—Fate of Holland decided—The Stadtholder flies*

flies to England—Proclamation for landing Dutch Property a Fortnight after the Loss of Holland—Our Ministers' general Conduct towards Holland—Parliament meets—King's Speech—Debates thereupon—Accession to the Minority.

LITTLE did the exertions of our Ministers appear calculated to forward the peace, welfare and happiness of the people, although providentially the want of forethought and consistency in their plans to criminate and crush the cause of parliamentary reform failed not to operate an unintended benefit. The folly and weakness in executing their designs gave some security to the people against the malice and danger of devising them. The great assurance against deception, which a beneficent protecting Providence holds out to man in this perplexing labyrinth of human uncertainty, is the extreme difficulty of giving consistency to any system of falsity and delusion. The aggregate of the events which have marked the year 1794, as the most calamitous and disgraceful of any in the British annals, has, like the hand upon the wall of the Babylonian

Babylonian Monarch, engraven the dread conviction upon every Briton's mind, that this fatal war is persisted in neither for the restoration of monarchy nor religion to France, neither for the protection of our allies, nor defence of our own country: that the ministerial charges and even legislative averments of treason have not proved the existence of any conspiracy against the government and constitution: but that the rash and inhuman perseverance in this wanton waste of blood and treasure will inevitably work the downfall of that establishment, which it is the wish and interest of every good man to uphold.

The impressions made by the existing circumstances upon the different parties to this ill-fated federacy, were a warning to us to reflect seriously upon the consequences of persisting obstinately in an object, which now all our confederates were giving up as desperate and dangerous. An actual negotiation was said to have been set on foot at Basle between his Prussian Majesty and French Commissioners. The Court of Vi-

enna, notwithstanding our offers and solicitations, was believed really to be desirous of peace. The States General had formally determined to negotiate a separate peace with the French Convention. Treillard and Eschafferaux were supposed to be sent to treat with the Court of Madrid. Even the Royalists, who as late as the month of August had published an exhortatory proclamation *de par le Roy* from the Generals and Chiefs of the Catholic and Royal Armies * in Brittany to all French soldiers to rally round their standards, were now so affected by the change of system in the Conventional Government, that most of them had actually laid aside their past rancour and animosities with their arms, and fraternized with their countrymen. In the Diet of Ratibon, when the suffrages were collected upon the pacificatory proposition of the Elector of Mentz, the majority of the Diet acceded to it; it was only opposed by the

* It was signed by forty-two of their chief Leaders, all men of rank and respectability in the ancient system.

Hanoverian Minister Baron d'Ompfda. Thus did the Cabinet of St. James stand out the only objection to the pacification of Europe.

Under the full conviction of the impossibility of success did his Royal Highness resign the chief command of the British army on the Continent. From the want of concert, energy and fidelity in our allies all offensive measures had been long given up : and from the extreme reluctance of the Hollanders to oppose the French, and the hatred which upon all occasions they manifested against the British troops, defensive operations were become as disheartening as they were desperate and ineffectual. With whatever levity or apathy the humiliations and sufferings of an army can be treated by an intriguing Cabinet, which sacrifices the blood and treasures of a people to their own folly, avarice or ambition ; yet the brave foldier, who even courts danger for his country's cause, sickens and retreats from the scenes of wanton bloodshed, when he can

no longer prevent his valiant comrades from falling inglorious, to the advantage and triumph of an insulting enemy.

From the reports of his Royal Highness upon the state of his army and the disposition of the country they were destined to defend, it surely became the duty of Ministers to take some cautionary measures for an honourable and safe retreat, both for our own troops and the party which employed them, out of a country which invited rather than resisted their invaders. But that fatal supineness which marked the commencement of their warlike operations, stamped every successive measure with the same indelible infamy to the very close of their disasters. Their resource under all difficulties, their remedy to all evils, were not any change of measures, no additional energy even to their first inefficient plans, but an increase only of their numbers to divide and share the responsibility in their failures. Upon this accession to their numbers some shifts and changes were found necessary in
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the Cabinet arrangement. Though the assiduity and energy of Lord Chatham at the Admiralty Board could not be secured to the public, the command of his vote in the Cabinet could not be dispensed with. The care therefore of the marine department was consigned to the fervour and activity of the newly converted Earl of Spencer, and the custody of the Privy Seal committed to the cooler steadiness of the Earl of Chatham. The deserters from the Whig Party had come over upon the express condition of possessing the confidence and rank of veterans in the service; there was however at first much embarrassment in marshalling them in the rank and order of their claims and merits. The settling of the balance of power in the Cabinet was a work of infinite address: for, notwithstanding the sworn cordiality of the new proselytes, and the claim upon them of gratitude for uncommon remuneration, the old Ministerial phalanx would not honour their new converts with unreserved confidence: the open diffidence of

of hostility gave place to the jealous mistrust of rivalry. In Mr. Pitt's eagerness to detach these deserters from their old party, he had so far overstretched his bounty as to have exposed himself to the danger of an equality in the Cabinet. To retrieve this fatal error in the most honourable way, he dispatched Lord Fitzwilliam to Ireland, and thus secured to himself the casting voice. This slip in negotiating, which might have proved so fatal to the old Ministerial party, must have arisen from a very unaccountable inattention on one hand, to the double efficiency and single vote of Mr. Secretary Dundas; and on the other, to the revival of the long abolished office of Third Secretary of State, and the unprecedented appointment of a supernumerary expletive in the British Cabinet. By sending Lord Fitzwilliam to Ireland, and not filling up the vacancy in the Cabinet occasioned by his removal, the Minister reduced the equality of votes to a sure majority in his own favour: thus effectually curing his first error.

By promoting Lord Mansfield* to the Presidency of the Council he atoned for the precipitate and useless increase of Court influence, by abolishing the short-lived appointment of Assistant Supernumerary to the Cabinet. This disinterested patriot too highly valued the consequence of his own services, not to impress his country also with a sympathetic feel of justice in rewarding them. The thrifty negotiator was not to be removed from the profits and easy duty of offering advice and voting for his brother converts, without a full and valuable consideration for such eminent services in so dangerous a crisis. He accordingly previously bargained for the reversion of Mr.

* To prevent anachronism and mistakes in future annalists and future readers, it ought to be remarked, that this Earl of Mansfield, though for a great part of his life in possession of the splendid revenue of 15,000*l.* per annum of the public money, is a different person from that great luminary of English law, who to the brightest talents joined a life of the most active services to a country, which will look up with grateful veneration to his memory as long as one vestige of English jurisprudence shall continue.

Oswald's lucrative sinecure of First Auditor of the Exchequer in Scotland, for his second son a youth at school. Thus ravenous for the spoils was this *Nestor* of the Cabinet.

The Parliament of Ireland, which was to have met on the 4th of the current month, was prorogued to the 22d of January, in order to give time for the previous arrangements in the ministerial departments of that kingdom. A preliminary condition with the Minister before the defection of the Portlandists from their old party was understood to be an unconditional disposal of the whole patronage of Ireland, and a *carte blanche* to introduce into that kingdom whatever reform and innovation they should think expedient and necessary for the welfare and happiness of the people. This was the only symptom which these fugitives retained of the principles of their former party. As their adherence to it was likely to produce some good to a large part of his Majesty's subjects, it was fortunate for the nation that they retained even this relic of
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their former doctrines. The systematical and rooted objections which the administration of Mr. Pitt had uniformly manifested against every extension of the liberty of the subject, could not consistently approve of this remnant of Whiggism in their new associates. The full emancipation of that kingdom was the glorious object which they professed to accomplish; and the previous necessary step was the removal of those men from office, whose monopoly of power had hitherto been the unsurmountable obstacle to that desirable end. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had either been crafty, ambiguous or hasty in negotiating. He now peremptorily objected against the removal of any one of his old faithful and zealous servants. They might only command the future patronage, as it should drop in. The contest became serious: at last it appears to have been compromised. The Beresford interest was given up, on condition that Lord Fitzgibbon should retain the Seals.

Time only will shew how far the Mini-

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ster was sincere in refusing to give up this trusty and active instrument of his designs. If our Minister still really mean to resist the cries of the Irish for their promised and now sanguinely-expected emancipation, in vain will the Lord Lieutenant force the Chancellor to an involuntary surrender of the seals, by diffidence, frowns, or coldness. If, on the other hand, he mean only to varnish the sacrifice of his friend with the plausible appearance of support, he will leave him to be teased, mortified, or provoked by others into a voluntary resignation.

Although it be generally an ungracious duty for an historian to tread close upon the heels of the rising events, yet anticipation and prediction are beyond his province. If however it be allowable from the promise of present appearances to judge of future events, the next session of the Irish Parliament will be famed for the reconciliation of the most wonderful of all political paradoxes; the full co-incidence and cordial

dial co-operation of the most jarring interests: patriots dosed with places still voracious for reform of abuses: voluntary concessions of those things, which Parliament stood pledged for ever to refuse: the British Minister fulfilling a promise, that tends to enlarge the liberty of the subject! Too flattering surely is this prospect to be realised, in the present spirit of resisting and refusing every thing which favours of reform or emendation, or which tends to extend the freedom of the people.

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?

The expectations of the Irish nation are now too highly mounted patiently to brook a serious disappointment.

Although it be true, that Ireland must stand or fall in war with Great Britain, and that her counsels are always or generally directed by the British Cabinet, yet must it be ever denied, that an independent and powerful kingdom should be so base and ancillary to the British Ministry, as to sanc-

tion and support a measure big with folly and mischief, merely because it is brought forward by men in office, who are ever liable to act without wisdom or integrity. It would be but a piteous solace to Ireland to have co-operated largely in a ruinous and calamitous war, that involved the fate of the whole British Empire.

About the middle of this month occurred such an instance of ministerial assurance, as never disgraced the most despotic period of the British Monarchy. At a time when the calamitous failure of all our projects foreboded certain ruin by persevering in this fatal crusade against France, Mr. Pitt not only predetermined the question of war or peace for the ensuing Parliament, but anticipated the co-operation of the Emperor in another campaign, by opening a negotiation for a loan for 24,000,000*l.* of which 6,000,000*l.* were for his Imperial Majesty. If any thing can demonstrate the prostitution of the House of Commons to the

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waiting one little fortnight would have prevented this outrage upon the rights and dignity of the House: and if the draining of the Treasury had been the occasion of the urgency, the Parliament should not have been prorogued beyond the day first appointed for its meeting.

So bewildered and enthralled were his Majesty's Ministers in this complicated maze of daily increasing difficulties, that they seemed to have forgotten the objects of their first intentions, and now thought nothing of those facts upon which they once rested their surest confidence of success. It never can be forgotten, with what arrogant assurance it was once asserted in the House of Commons, that the army should march up to Paris to put an end to the war by exterminating the Jacobin Club, which was the soul and strength of the whole Revolutionary System. And now that our armies were upon the point of evacuating in despair their last defensive hold upon the Continent, the Convention
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found itself so firmly settled upon the basis of republicanism, as to have sent Commissioners to the Jacobin Club to effect in one half hour what our visionary projectors would have boasted in sacrificing millions to accomplish in the space of a twelve-month. They expelled the Members of the Jacobin Club, seized all their papers, shut up the hall, and dissolved the Society. " Thus," says one of their journals, " has
 " ended a Society, which, after having rendered great services to the revolution, received into its bosom men ambitious of
 " power and wealth, who had monopolized places of trust and profit, and which had
 " served, perhaps without suspecting that it did so, the leaders of factions, whose criminal machinations postponed the return
 " of order and of justice, now so eagerly desired by the whole nation, and so earnestly pursued by the Representatives of the
 " People. Let those who view with amazement the extreme reverse of fortune,
 " which this celebrated Society has experienced, consider, that the means of re-
 " conquering

“conquering Liberty are not the proper
 “means for preserving it; and that the
 “system of terror can be only temporary
 “before an enemy in arms, while that of
 “justice and humanity ought to take its
 “place when the enemy is vanquished, sub-
 “dued and disarmed.”

If any particle of sincerity had actuated
 our motives for entering into and perse-
 vering in this war, it is evident that the
 weakening and consequent abolition of the
 republican party must have been their pri-
 mary object: yet at this very time were
 their armies on the point of closing their
 successful career of conquest, whilst their
 Convention at home was exhibiting the
 most unequivocal confidence in the perma-
 nent establishment of their government.
 Under this full conviction did Lequinio
 propose to the Convention, to remove in the
 person of young Capet the only rallying
 point of the few remaining Royalists in
 France; when the Convention instantly and
 unanimously decreed that measures should
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be proposed by the Committees for sending out of the Republic the last vestige of Royalty that existed amongst them.

Upon the like principle did the Convention decree the arrest of La Croix, who relying upon the present system of moderation had published a book, in which he had spoken problematically of the disposition of the French people to a limited monarchy. The debate which this circumstance gave rise to produced from the Convention an unanimous and enthusiastic acclamation for Republicanism, and in execration of Royalty. The full conviction of the permanency of the Republican Government of France induced the Senate of Venice to accredit L'Allemand as the Ambassador from the French Republic to that of Venice.

Whatever degree of merit could have accrued to our Ministers for the conquests made by Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis in the West Indies, the whole was
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now more than cancelled by the supineness, with which they suffered their remaining force in the Islands so to dwindle by disease, service and accidents, as to be absolutely incompetent to defend our captured possessions. The original force which was intended to have been sent out by Sir Charles Grey was 10,000 effective men; instead of which number, the actual force he landed in the West Indies scarcely exceeded the half of that number; insomuch that when he returned to Europe he did not leave 3000 men behind him to defend thirteen islands. Above 1000 of the British troops in the West Indies were posted in Guadaloupe, 500 of whom were disabled by sickness from actual service. Rochambeau the French General collected in America a force of about 600 men, principally refugees from the captured islands: they landed in Guadaloupe, and soon made themselves masters of the whole island. From the most recent accounts that have been received from the West Indies,

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very serious alarms are apprehended for the safety of the remaining part of our late conquests in that quarter.

The successful and rapid progress of the French arms within the eastern and western Pyrenees threatened Spain with immediate conquest, and the only means of preserving their independence was now left in negotiation. That kingdom was divided into two parties. The party of the reigning Minister D'Alcudia was opposed by that of the Ex-Minister D'Aranda, who had uniformly warned his country against the impolicy and danger of plunging into this fatal war. The thoughtless and arrogant impetuosity of the court favourite D'Alcudia had succeeded in driving his rival Statesmen into banishment and disgrace; and not unlike some other obstinate Statesmen in Europe, he had come to the desperate resolution of sacrificing the welfare and safety of his country to the inordinate lust of his own ambition and avarice.

Although

Although it were well understood that the States of Holland had actually commenced a negotiation for a separate peace with France, yet as it was well known that it had been attempted against the wishes and advice of the Stadtholder, the French armies rather increased than relaxed their exertions: yet the favour and partiality which on all occasions they shewed to the Dutch prisoners evidently proved, that they no longer looked upon them as their enemies. When the town of Grave surrendered, the French granted to the Dutch troops the honourable terms of marching out with their arms and ammunition, with full liberty of serving against them as soon as they pleased; all their prisoners that were taken at Nimeguen were permitted to go at large upon their parole, and actually received allowances for their maintenance equal to their respective appointments in their own service.

The only effectual stand made by the Combined Armies was at Mentz. This unfortunate city, from its situation, has during

during the present war been constantly exposed to its severest calamities. The Elector was the most desirous of peace of any of the Germanic body : he had not only made a proposition for it in the Diet of Ratisbon, but had used all his interest, though in vain, to engage their Imperial and Prussian Majesties to order their respective Generals to enter without delay into a negotiation with the French. There was a garrison of 20,000 men well supplied with all provisions in the city, who seemed as determined to defend it to the last, as the besiegers were to take it by storm. The latter made five different attempts to take the place by assault, in each of which they were repulsed with the loss of several thousands of their choice troops. The French still continued in great force before Mentz ; yet they sent a considerable body of their troops to threaten the town of Mannheim with a bombardment : this the inhabitants so much dreaded, that they sent a Deputation to the Elector Palatine, offering to pay an exorbitant sum of money for a cessation of hostilities, in order

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to save their city from ruin. The Elector returned for answer, That for the security of the Empire it was found necessary to defend Manheim to the last extremity. The French in the mean while laid close siege to the contiguous Fort du Rhin, which with the artillery, ammunition, and garrison of 3000 men they summoned three several times to surrender. This the Austrian General at length found it necessary to do, upon condition that the town of Manheim should not be bombarded. The French affected at this time to disclaim any intention to carry their hostilities beyond the right bank of the Rhine.

The fate of Holland was now determined. The French spread a general alarm along the whole line of British posts. In one point they crossed the Waal, surprised and cut to pieces the Hanoverian posts, and retired before the British troops could come up with them. By this manoeuvre it appeared, that this river was no check to their progress whenever they chose to advance
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into the country. The French however waited for the setting in of the frost, in order to complete the total reduction of Holland; and it is not improbable, that they delayed on purpose their grand irruption, lest in the alarm the Dutch ships of war might be carried out of the Texel and their other ports, presuming that the intenseness of the frost would, as the case has happened, completely block them in. When they began their grand movement, no stand was even attempted to be made against them. The Dutch troops every where surrendered, the British made the best of their way towards Germany, the Stadtholder and his family escaped in bye boats to England, and Holland became an easy and bloodless prey to the French.

No sooner was the fate of Holland decided, and the opportunity of transporting any valuables from thence to this country absolutely lost, than our provident Ministry saw the folly of their past conduct; and in about a fortnight issued a Proclamation

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for admitting into the ports of this kingdom all goods, wares, merchandizes and effects belonging to the subjects of the United Provinces, in order that they might be preserved in safe custody for the benefit of the proprietors. With difficulty do we suppress the most indignant emotions, whenever we turn in our thoughts and coolly reflect upon the conduct of our Ministers towards the United Provinces. Within the short space of two years, they rejected with disdain the most importuning offers of the French Government to guarantee their Independency; they reluctantly forced them into a war both against their inclination and their interest; they co-operated with them without cordiality, union, or concert; they treated them as enemies to the very cause, which by force they had engaged them in, and with a most zealous ingenuity co-operated with the enemy in forwarding the conquest of their favourite ally.

If Mr. Burke alleged truly at the commencement

menacement of hostilities, that the Banks of Amsterdam and London were identified, it may be feared, that the fate of Holland may also in some manner be identified with that of Great Britain. Then will it be no frivolous alarm, to fear that the perseverance in a system which has so rapidly worked the ruin of the one, will with increased velocity operate that of the other. Had the seasonable and prudent warnings of Mr. Fox been attended to, the United Provinces would still have retained their sovereignty and preserved our alliance, without the loss of either blood or treasure.

Whatever inclination our too confident Minister might have to defer the humiliating hour of settling his account with the Nation, we find by his indecent precipitancy to anticipate the Loan, that the draining of the Treasury alone compelled him to convene the Parliament: for though he could negotiate a Loan without their concurrence, he could not effectually raise the

supplies without the formality of their vote. True it is, that in the present gloomy aspect of affairs, the Minister did not as in the last year put into his Majesty's mouth the insulting boast of success, yet he still kept up the fond delusion of a *just* and *necessary* war. "Notwithstanding the disappointments and reverses which we have experienced in the course of the last campaign, I retain a firm conviction of the necessity of persisting in a vigorous prosecution of the *just* and *necessary* war, in which we are engaged." He proposes to the Nation as a reason for their perseverance in the war, the unexampled efforts which have insured to the enemy the most unexampled successes. He announces with the gravity of importance the super-eminent advantages of tacking the Corsican trinket to the venerable diadem of England. The communications upon the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation with America, and the marriage of the Prince of Wales, were the only unobjectionable parts of the Speech.

In

In the Lords, the Address of Thanks was moved by Lord Camden, and seconded by Lord Besborough. This was the formal recantation of this noble Earl's errors of Whiggism: as his conversion had been a matter of incredible surprise to many, he found it necessary to make it a matter of solemn notoriety to all. Lord Guildford rose to propose an amendment to the Address, which equally expressed the determination of that House to support his Majesty in the measures necessary for maintaining the honour and independence of the Crown, and to provide for the defence and safety of the Nation; but at the same time to advise his Majesty to take the earliest means of concluding a peace with the French Nation upon such terms, as it might be prudent and reasonable to insist upon. His Lordship was astonished at the effrontery of Ministers in persevering in a war in which they had completely failed in every transaction, foreign, domestic, military or diplomatic. Lord Lansdowne with his usual eloquence and instructive information displayed in a most striking manner

ner all the leading features of the last calamitous campaign. He recollected with pleasure his protest and motion against the war, as every successive disaster had confirmed the propriety of his making them *. It was observed that several of the Lords, and particularly those, who are vulgarly but erroneously called the *King's Friends*, either did not attend in their places or declined voting. The Duke of Leeds and the Marquis of Abercorn openly avowed their disapprobation of the war; the latter particularly reprobated the system which had been persevered in by the Ministry in a very pointed, strong and eloquent speech. The answers and replies of all the Ministerial Members were exclusively confined to the impossibi-

* In the course of his speech he favoured the House with the operations of the French armies in the campaign of 1794: 23 sieges successfully conducted; 6 pitched battles decisively won; 2803 pieces of cannon taken; 6000 of the best troops in Europe compelled to surrender prisoners of war; 144 towns and cities captured, amongst which are many of the strongest fortresses in Europe.

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ity of the French continuing their exertions in the manner they already had done.

In the Commons Mr. Sheridan delayed for a considerable length of time the motion for the Address, by introducing the question upon the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and by some observations upon the office of third Secretary of State, by the acceptance of which he presumed Mr. Dundas had vacated his seat in that House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer set him to rights, by assuring him that the Duke of Portland was the *nominal third Secretary**.

At length the King's Speech was read, when Sir Edward Knatchbull rose to move the Address, which was seconded by Mr. Canning. The appointment of this Gentleman to second the Address on so awful an

* Mr. Fox could not refrain from expressing his grief, that the Duke of Portland, whom he would never mention but with respect on account of their long political intimacy and friendship, should condescend to accept of an office which he himself had thought ought to be abolished.

emergency, bespoke no great confidence in the Treasury Bench to be supported by any very respectable addition upon the question. An amendment of a similar tendency with that proposed in the Lords was moved for by Mr. Wilberforce, and seconded by Mr. Duncombe. These two Gentlemen had formerly been strenuous supporters of the Minister : they represent the most populous and opulent county in England, and, acting according to the wishes of their Constituents, afforded no unequivocal proof of the prevalence of the people's execration of the present war. The debate took nearly the same turn as it had in the Lords. Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas defended with great warmth their perseverance in the war upon the same grounds, upon which they had so often rested their motives for commencing it. The Opposition was increased by near forty Members of independent fortunes and great respectability in the country.

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FOR the instruction and conveniency of my Countrymen, I have collected these historical annals of the last eventful twelve-month; they labour with matter big with the fate of the British Empire. But the present alarming ferment of the public mind forbids argument. Truth no longer instructs. Reason has ceased to convince. Be it to others to preconize the prudence, forethought, candour, consistency and patriotism of our present Ministers. The nation has now fully tried them. I have endeavoured to place the naked facts before their eyes, and shall shudder, if they sicken not at the hideous reflection from this undeceiving mirror. We have been told from high authority, that the direst curse, which an avenging Deity hurled upon a wicked hardened people, was the folly and obstinacy of their rulers persisting in a war of extermination. *I will harden Pharaoh's heart that he shall follow after them.*



